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# THE PREACHER'S COMMENTARY

ON

# THE CORINTHIANS

THE

# Preacher's Complete Homiletical

# COMMENTARY

ON THE

# NEW TESTAMENT

*(ON AN ORIGINAL PLAN)*

With Critical and Explanatory Notes, Indices, &c., &c.

BY

VARIOUS AUTHORS

New York
FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY
LONDON AND TORONTO
1896

A

# HOMILETICAL COMMENTARY

ON THE

# EPISTLES OF ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS

BY

REV. HENRY J. FOSTER

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THE

# PREACHER'S HOMILETICAL COMMENTARY.

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# I. AND II. CORINTHIANS.

## INTRODUCTION.

I. THE Homilist should keep in his mind something like the following **Synopsis** of the story in the Acts, relating to Paul's movements and labours at the period during which our Epistles were written :—

(*a*) Acts xviii. 1. After preaching at Athens, **Paul enters Corinth for the first time** (1 Cor. ii. 1). [Second missionary journey.] Silas and Timothy had been left behind at Berœa, with orders from Athens to join him as early as possible, he waiting at Athens for them (xvii. 15).

(*b*) 2-4. Lives and works with Aquila and Priscilla, themselves recently come to Corinth from Rome.

(*c*) 5. Silas and Timothy rejoin him.

(*d*) 6-8. After giving the Jews the first of his (specially earnest, ver. 5 ; note the *var. lect.*) labour, he removes from the synagogue to the house of Justus close by, taking with him Crispus (1 Cor. i. 14) ; many Corinthians, baptized (1 Cor. i. 14, not by him as a rule), reward his labour in the new place.

(*e*) 9-11. Special vision of Christ to encourage him (1 Cor. ii. 3). **An eighteen months' stay,** *during which* (allowing *"a good while" after it,* ver. 18) occurred *the riot and Paul's appearance before Gallio* [Sosthenes] (12-17).

(*f*) 18-21. With Priscilla and Aquila he **crossed to Ephesus**; himself *en route* for Jerusalem, they remaining in Ephesus (1 Cor. xvi. 19).

(*g*) 22, 23. Cæsarea, Jerusalem; "some time" in Antioch; then Galatia and Phrygia, "in order."

(*h*) [24-28. **Apollos comes to Ephesus.** After his instruction by Aquila and Priscilla, the brethren commend him to Achaia, where he "waters" what Paul had "planted" (1 Cor. iii. 6).]

(*j*) Acts xix. 1-7. During (*h*) **Paul** completes (*g*) and **reaches Ephesus.** John the Baptist's disciples, (of whom Apollos had been one).

(*k*) 8-12. **Three months** of discussion *in the Ephesian synagogue.* Then **two years** in the school of Tyrannus, hired or lent. "All Asia" hear the word. Handkerchief and apron miracles.

(*l*) 13-20. Ephesian magic vanquished. "*Word grows mightily and prevails.*"

(*m*) 21, 22. **After these things** (making "**three years,**" Acts xx. 31) Paul plans *a journey to Jerusalem, viâ Macedonia and Achaia. Timothy* and *Erastus* sent into Macedonia before him.

(*n*) 23-41. While Paul lingers in Ephesus, the riot of Demetrius occurs.

(*o*) Acts xx. 1. Paul "goes over" [*viâ* Troas (2 Cor. ii. 12)] Macedonia, "giving them much exhortation."

(*p*) 2, 3. **Three months in Greece,** *i.e.* (probably chiefly) **in Corinth.** Intended to sail for Syria, but a plot of the Jews made him go first to Macedonia (Berœa, Thessalonica, Philippi); thence to Troas, Miletus, etc., to Jerusalem; thence, ultimately, to Rome.

II. 1. **Two visits,** therefore, are recorded **in the Acts** [(*a*)—(*f*) and (*p*)], separated by the interval occupied by the journey to Jerusalem, "some time" in Antioch, the visit to Galatia and Phrygia "in order" [(*g*)], and three years in Ephesus [(*j*)—(*m*)]. The first appears by reminiscent allusion several times in the First Epistle, particularly in chaps. i.-iv. The second is subsequent to both letters, being, however, before Paul's mind in 1 Cor. xvi. 1-7, though his plans were subsequently modified in detail.

2. **An intermediate visit, not mentioned in the Acts,** is argued by many from 2 Cor. ii. 1 ["I would not come again to you in heaviness"]; xii. 14, 21 ["the third time I am ready to come"]; xiii. 1, 2 ["this is the third time I am coming"]. Those who, like (*e.g.*) Stanley, "assume that there were no visits of St. Paul to Corinth besides those mentioned" as above (II. 1), join "again" in 2 Cor. ii. 1 rather with "come" than with "heaviness" [*i.e.* "When I should come again—a second time—it should not be with heaviness, after my first long and not unhappy stay of labour and of success"; and not, "When I should come, it should not again be with heaviness, a second sad visit"]. Also they minimise the force of "third," in xii. 14, by emphasising "I am *ready* to come" [*i.e.* counting (1) Acts xviii., when he was ready, and did actually come; (2) when he was ready, but he did not come ("according to the plan mentioned in 2 Cor. i. 15, 16"); (3) when he was now again ready, and did actually come as in (*p*)]. On the other side, if "again in heaviness" be very closely connected together, it is urged that the visit of Acts xviii. 1 [(*a*)—(*f*)] by no means satisfies the frequent expressions of its grief and deep humiliation

to himself, [" Are these *my* converts? Is this the kind of work which after all I have alone been able to accomplish?"]; that the reading in all the Uncials (as R.V. Greek text) does so join "come" with "in heaviness"; that 2 Cor. xiii. 2 (where "I write" disappears in all best manuscripts) requires the translation (R.V.) "when I was," and not (A.V.) "as if I were." Paley discredits a second, intermediate visit; Conybeare and Howson maintain it. Waite (in *Speaker*, 2 Cor., Introd.) claims that the intermediate visit "is now generally admitted." The better critical texts of to-day perhaps tell more in favour of it; but certainty is unattainable, and the matter is rather of interest for the Bible-class than for the pulpit. Certainly constant intercourse by sea, comparable (C. and H.) to that between New York and Liverpool, was going on between the two flourishing commercial centres of Corinth and Ephesus.

3. **A visit intended and announced by Paul, but not paid,** is implied in 2 Cor. i. 23. The change of plan occasioned the malicious suggestions as to his whole character and his motives in the change, against which he protests in chap. i. What the change was is incidentally explained in 1 Cor. xvi. 7. Earlier than the writing of the First Epistle he had intended (and announced to them somehow [query in a lost epistle? See below]) that he would visit Corinth *on his way* (v. 7) from Ephesus to Macedonia [*i.e.* to have left Ephesus earlier than he actually did, in (*o*), and to have gone to Macedonia *vid* Corinth]. In point of fact, as he tells them, by the time the First Epistle was ready, he had made up his mind not thus to see them "by the way" and in passing, but rather to come to them later on. His work in Ephesus urgently demanded him; he could not leave it; and therefore he would not come until, having first been to Macedonia, he could stay longer with them, and perhaps even "winter" with them; as, in fact, he did in (*p*). This longer visit he had all along purposed to make in any case; he would have returned from Macedonia to Corinth for it; it would have been, counting the (omitted) flying visit, "a second benefit" (2 Cor. i. 15, 16). It is the visit (*p*) in the **Synopsis.** The intended but omitted visit, therefore, falls of course into the three years at Ephesus, (*j*)—(*m*).

The preacher may notice how many reasons concurred in inducing Paul to forego this intermediate brief visit to Corinth on the way to Macedonia. In the First Epistle, as was said above, he speaks of the need of remaining longer in Ephesus because of the "open door" and the "many adversaries" (1 Cor. xvi.). But in 2 Cor. i. 23 he solemnly declares that his deepest reason was that he might not "as yet" be obliged to take in hand the grave wrong-doing at Corinth, and use his Apostolic authority in sharp, severe punishment. That Ephesus needed the time which a visit to Corinth would have occupied was true, and was all he needed to say in his First Epistle. Such "policy" was "honesty." He does not say outright all that is true; there was no need to do so. All that he says, however, is true, and the suppression of the deeper, concurrent reason had in it no attempt to mislead. Then, further, the change of his plan of route, by leaving open at least a few weeks' margin for an improvement at Corinth, promised to spare himself a visit of distress, whether a second of that character or not (2 Cor. ii. 1). And, once more, "to this end also did I write," rather

than carry out his original purpose to come *en route* to Macedonia, that he might see whether, not so much his Apostolic authority over them, but their grateful love to him, would secure submission to his directions in the First Epistle (*ib.*, ver. 9). There was no "lightness," no fickleness or infirmity of purpose, in the change of plan (2 Cor. i. 17). Still less was there any insincerity in it; as he protests, God knew him better than that, and surely they also knew him better (2 Cor. i. 12-14). And we may add that in adducing now one reason and now another, all perfectly consistent, and each one perfectly good and sufficient, there is nothing inconsistent with the most transparent simplicity of Christian trust. Says Jeremy Taylor, not remotely from such a question of Christian morals: "In every more solemn action of Religion join together *many good ends* that . . . when any one ceases, the purity of your intention may be supported by another purpose," though we may hardly go so far as to say with him that, "Certain it is, the more good ends are designed by an action, the more degrees of excellency the man obtains." (*Holy Living*, Chap. I., § ii., rule 6.) Paul's action was misconstrued, perhaps in part wilfully, and was misrepresented. Said the disloyal to the loyal ones "of Paul," "See your valorous apostle. There is no dependence upon his word. He cries 'Yes' and 'No' in a breath. He knew what a storm his letter would arouse, and he dared not face it. So he puts forth some fine story about his work at Ephesus being so urgent that he cannot now come to us until he comes to winter with us!" Says Taylor again: "It is likely our hearts are pure and our intentions spotless, when we are not *solicitous* of the *opinion* and censures of men; but only that we do our duty and be accepted of God. For our eyes will certainly be fixed there from whence we expect our reward; and if we desire that God should approve us, it is a sign that we do His work and expect Him our paymaster." All which assurance Paul claims to have had (2 Cor. i. 12, ii. 17, v. 9-12; 1 Cor. iv. 3).

III. 1. **Was there an epistle now lost?**—Stanley, in continuation of the sentence quoted above, II. 2, adds, "[It is assumed throughout these pages that there were] no Epistles except the two now extant in the New Testament." Many, on the other hand (*e.g.* Conybeare and Howson), read 1 Cor. v. 9, compared with ver. 11, as speaking of an epistle earlier than the extant "First," of which in this particular point a sentence had been misunderstood, and is now in ver. 11 explained and made more definitely clear. This letter is generally, if accepted at all, placed shortly after Paul's return to Ephesus from the (inferred) brief visit, discussed above, II. 2. It is urged that just as 2 Cor. vii. 8 manifestly refers to our "First" Epistle, and just as 2 Cor. ii. 2, 9 also plainly refer to it, and are not—cannot be—instances of the epistolary aorist, so it is most natural to take 1 Cor. v. 9 to refer to an earlier letter; and that indeed there is hardly anything in i. 1—v. 8 to which the sense will, with any naturalness, allow Paul to be making any back reference. Even Stanley only suggests that Paul intended his directions, given in v. 1-8, about "purging out the old leaven," to carry the sense which ver. 9 puts into plain words; and supposes a possible pause in the writing of the letter at ver. 8, so that either a new amanuensis, or the old one resuming his work, begins, "I have written in the epistle," etc.

A letter not now extant, and possibly shorter, seems most natural. Its loss need not surprise, or cause any difficulty. The matter of the extant Bible is confessedly based in many places upon a larger mass of material which has not been preserved. For example, the regal histories in the Old Testament are distinctly extracted from the larger, official, perhaps daily, records of the kings of Judah and Israel. John's Gospel, in an easily understood hyperbole, confesses that "the world could not contain" a complete and exhaustive record of the sayings and doings of Christ (John xx. 30, 31). But the extant Bible is not a chance survival, a collection of the relics of a lost literature. John's concluding words carry a key-principle: "These things—selected from so many more—are written that ye might believe," etc. The Bible is an ordered, orderly selection, with a purpose. The Book is a Divinely authentic account of the revelation of God's redemption in Christ for fallen mankind, and of its historical unfolding. Biography and history are written with that purpose in view. What shall be included, what shall be omitted, is all regulated by the requirements of that purpose; the scale on which what is included shall be treated, whether dismissed in a "verse" or expanded into a chapter, depends on that. Men and events are important or unimportant, according to the measure of their serviceableness to the work of bringing onward God's redemption. What is here is all wanted for that; what is not here might have been very interesting in many other points of view, but it was not wanted for this; for God's purpose it did not matter. [Duplicate, parallel books, such as Kings and Chronicles, chapters of names like Romans xvi., every smallest "minor" prophet, have valuable bearing upon at least the credentials of a revelation which is historical in fact and in form.] So too the lost epistle does not leave us really "losers," except in the sense that a curious piece of ancient epistolary literature has perished; it contained nothing which is not permanently and fully preserved for us in the extant Epistles. Moreover, Paul is quite conscious of the value of anything he writes (1 Cor. xiv. 37; 1 Thess. v. 27, etc.), and would almost certainly guide a Church in such close connection with himself as Corinth was, in regard to the preservation and the relative worth of his letters.

2. **The two extant Epistles can be located in the history within very narrow limits**; the Second, indeed, very precisely. As to the **First**:—

(1) Paul is in "Asia" (xvi. 19), in Ephesus (xvi. 8; with the highest degree of probability). Therefore it falls within (*j*)—(*n*).

(2) Apollos is back again in Ephesus (xvi. 12), after a visit to Corinth, which Acts xviii. 27, 28 and xix. 1 give the impression was a fairly long one. Not earlier, then, than (*k*).

(3) Nor later than (*m*), where, as in the First Epistle, Paul is planning his Macedonian visit. Indeed, if the sending of Timothy, mentioned in the Epistle (iv. 17, xvi. 10), be identical with that of Acts xix. 22, we almost certainly locate the First Epistle at the point of time in this last verse.

(Note: Timothy and Erastus are said to be sent forward only "into Macedonia," and in the Epistle (xvi. 10) Paul expresses doubt whether Timothy will come so far as Corinth.) Working backward from one of the two fixed points in the chronology of the Acts, the removal of Felix from the governorship, A.D. 60, we are brought to 57 or 58 as the year; before Pentecost

(1 Cor. xvi. 8); possibly (1 Cor. v. 17, but this is very precarious) about Passover-tide.

As to the **Second**:—Plainly Paul is in Macedonia, having quitted Ephesus, and even Troas, in his anxiety to meet Titus at the earliest possible moment, and to hear his news from Corinth as to the reception and effect of the First Epistle. This latter, then, belongs to (*o*), Acts xx. i.

IV. **The occasion of the First Epistle** lies upon the very surface of the letter. From members of the household of Chloe—whether residents in Corinth or in Ephesus is entirely uncertain, but in all probability having just come across from Corinth—he has heard of the factions, and perhaps of the shameful sin (v. 1). Also Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus have recently arrived from Corinth, [perhaps bringing gifts toward his support, but at all events] by their coming and their attentions to Paul, doing the Corinthian Church the service, and giving Paul the comfort, of a personal kindness which the Church could only thus show by its representatives (xvi. 17). They probably have brought a letter of inquiry upon several specific topics (vii. 1). They perhaps returned with Titus, when he bore the First Epistle to Corinth.

**The occasion of the Second** is also manifest. In Macedonia [during (*o*) of the **Synopsis**] Paul has met Titus with news from Corinth, of mingled character, though on the whole good. For the most part the Church has obeyed the directions of the First Epistle. The incestuous man is penitent, and may well be restored to fellowship. But a perverse party still holds out in Corinth, who misconstrue his change of route and misrepresent himself. Personal vindication, mingled with overflowings of thankful relief, together with fuller and additional directions upon sundry matters, particularly the Jerusalem Poor Relief Fund Collection, which he just now is pushing wherever he goes, make up this letter, the most vividly personal of all his extant ones, revealing the man Paul as no other does.

[The verb "to boast" occurs twenty-nine times (Conybeare and Howson) in the Second Epistle, and only twenty-six times in all his other Epistles together—an incidental touch of the fulness of personal feeling manifested in it. Nowhere more clearly than here does the human element in an inspired writing meet us. Yet the teaching bears repeated and, so to speak, microscopic examination age after age, and age after age it bears applying to the new needs and questions of the life of the Church and the individual. Paul claims for what he writes a value and authority higher than any which any holiest or wisest man could naturally claim (1 Cor. xiv. 37); he claims to speak and write like an ancient prophet (1 Thess. iv. 15).]

[In the First Epistle the Church, in the Second Epistle the Apostle, give a distinctive character to these two vividly personal and unchallenged Epistles. The question as to the integrity of the Second, raised in connection with the change of tone at x. 1, is, so far as the preacher needs, discussed at that place.]

V. Too much should not be made of **the well-known proverbial character of Corinth** for elaborate, costly licentiousness. (Horace's rendering of the Greek saying: "It is not given to every man to take his pleasure at Corinth"; the

verb "to Corinthianise.") Strictly this belonged to the old Greek city, which was so completely destroyed by fire at the Roman capture by Memmius, B.C. 146, that (to borrow from Bishop Ellicott) "for a hundred years it lay in utter ruins, [like Chester and some other Roman towns in Britain until reoccupied by the Saxon invaders]; all the works of art which could be moved were carried away, and the greater part even of the temples overthrown and destroyed. Thus it remained till the year B.C. 46, when, for political reasons, Julius Cæsar determined to rebuild the ruined city. A large number of Roman colonists, principally veteran soldiers and freedmen (1 Cor. vii. 22), were sent there. Inhabitants from the neighbouring territories, heretofore forbidden to settle there, speedily flocked in; the relics of the ancient city were conserved; what remained of the public buildings were restored; and [as was sooner or later inevitable with a city so favourably situated between two busy seas], *Roman* Corinth, the Corinth of this [First] Epistle, rapidly rose to eminence and prosperity, and by the time Paul visited it was probably a busy city of a hundred thousand souls. The institutions were Roman, and, according to some writers, the language also; but however this may have been in the courts or in public documents, it is not very easily conceivable that the current language of the city was other than that in which St. Paul addressed his Christian converts. Indeed, it may probably be correctly said that Greek art, Greek culture, and, alas, Greek license and sensuality, were now predominant in the restored city, and that Roman Corinth had in many things reverted to the usages of the Corinth of the past. Though all the revolting immorality to which Strabo alludes must have belonged to an earlier period, yet it is perfectly clear from this Epistle that much of it had revived, and that the worship of Aphrodite, to whom the whole mountain against which the city rested was dedicated, was among the most baneful of the idolatries of the restored city." It had all the customary vice which unhappily belongs everywhere to great seaports, to which resort a constantly fresh succession of sailors, merchants, visitors, from every part of the world. One may suppose, too, that all the secularity of tone and temper which is so commonly intensified by the keen struggle of business in such great commercial centres, was also prevalent, with its accompanying feverish, restless activity of a life, dulled in its finer sensitiveness to wrong and right, easily satisfied with an average, conventional standard, and yet more easily satisfied, not to say enslaved, with the immediate good of the passing time (2 Cor. iv. 18; 1 Cor. vii. 29-31). [Robertson's Introductory Lecture very fine on these points.] "The study of philosophy" (to quote Bishop Ellicott further) "had also obviously revived. It was in no way likely that the now prosperous Corinth would not, to some considerable extent, have sought to maintain that culture which still kept up the neighbouring city of Athens as a sort of University of the ancient world." [On these points, see Homilies on 1 Cor. ii. 4, iii. 11 *sqq.*, etc.]

VI. **To those who use this Book.**—This is designed to be a book of material, and that for homiletic purposes. Everything has been dealt with subject to that one consideration. The "Critical Notes" are simply and only such notes, gathered from all available sources, as I judge a preacher would make when laying the foundation of a sermon, or in preparing for a Bible-class or week-

night lecture. No topic is discussed or followed out any further than seemed likely to be serviceable for a *preacher's* purposes. The plan of the Series requires that the material of the book should have something of homiletical form. But for the most part it is homiletic *material*; a quarry where nearly everything wants "getting" and working, though, no doubt, with a little skill, the quarryman who knows his business may easily detach blocks which will want very little shaping. It will be a very legitimate and happy serviceableness for the book, if, to an overworked preacher, whose mind seems *effete* and past originating anything, or to a hurried Sunday-school worker driven into a corner on a Saturday night, it should chance to do the turn of such a conversation or discussion with a friend as often starts the sluggard mind into activity again; or if now and again somebody, blamelessly pressed for time, finds his steel strike from one of these flints a spark which kindles his dull tinder into a cheerful and useful blaze. If some of the material seems fetched from *very* far—particularly what is thus marked [ ]—let it be remembered how variously men's minds work, in what different ways suggestions arise, at what unexpected places—for example, in a conversation—different listeners will "take hold." One man's steel will strike fire from a flint which will be of no use to his neighbour. There are therefore plenty of flints provided, and some tinder—very slight stuff! Each man brings his own steel.

N.B.—The Homiletical Suggestions marked [J. L.] are from a little volume of similar hints, by John Lyth, D.D. (Elliot Stock).

H. J. FOSTER.

# I. CORINTHIANS.

## CHAPTER I.

### *CRITICAL NOTES.*

Ver. 1. **Called** (to be) **an apostle.**—Only here and in Rom. i. 1. For exact force choose between, (*a*) one of Christ's "called" ones, who am also, in point of fact, an apostle; and (*b*) called specially to this, that I might be one of Christ's apostles [*q.d.* perhaps, "Though at Corinth there are some who say that I was not so called"]. Both are true; the latter here more likely. The *external* call and ordination of the Church (Acts xiii. 1, 2) coinciding with, and following upon, the *internal* and primary call of Christ Himself (Acts xxii. 17-21). **By the will of God.**—Shutting out, (*a*) man's authority, (*b*) any personal merit in Paul. **Sosthenes.**—Not certainly he of Acts xviii. 17, though Bengel believes the beating had the happy effect of making him a Christian; as, similarly, the impressment of Simon of Cyrene may have made him and his wife and sons Christians (Mark xv. 21; Rom. xvi. 13).

Ver. 2. **Church of God.**—So he calls it (but query the reading?) a little later (Acts xx. 28). New Testament equivalent of Old Testament "congregation of Jehovah" (*e.g.* Num. xvi. 3; Deut. xxiii. 2). **In Corinth.**—In Corinth, of all unlikely places! (see Homily). **Sanctified.**—Note the perfect tense. A sanctification of *relation to God* (as vii. 14), established at a definite date in the past, continuing into the present. **Called** (to be) **saints.**—Parallel to Paul's call *to office* (ver. 1). **Call upon the name.**—As Ananias bade Paul do, when he was becoming a Christian (Acts xxii. 16) [N.B. *reading*]. As Paul had heard Stephen do (Acts vii. 59) [cf. Paul's "I appeal (*same word*) unto Cæsar" (Acts xxv. 11). But this only illustrates a special case of the "calling upon." Word covers whole range of Prayer, as in the Old Testament equivalent and LXX. parallels]. **With all, etc.**—*Q.d.* "I am not writing to you only, though to you primarily and immediately, *i.e.* my letter to you is also for all who invoke Christ in their prayers, everywhere and in all ages" [cf. Rev. ii. 7, where what Christ says to Ephesus the **Spirit** says to the **Churches**]. **Theirs and ours.**—Most probably, "Their (Lord) and ours."

Ver. 3.—Claudius Lysias (Acts xxiii. 26), and even James (i. 1) and the Council at Jerusalem (Acts xv. 23), begin with "Greeting," the ordinary secular phrase. Here enlarged and ennobled by the Gospel into "grace," joined with the Old Testament "peace." Note how, as matter of course, Paul makes Christ a concurrent and co-ordinate source of grace with the Father.

Ver. 4.—Dean Howson (Hulsean Lectures, *Character of St. Paul*, iv.) remarks upon this and many similar incidental indications of Paul's tendency to break out into praise or prayer. "Pray without ceasing; in everything [*even for the good in a Church so full of evils as the Corinthian*] give thanks."

Ver. 4. **My God.**—"**My**," *q.d.* not only, "Whose I am, and whom I serve" (Acts xxvii. 23), but also, "Whom I know, and call, and claim **Mine**!" (Phil. iv. 19). "We belong to each other! I am His; He is mine. Note, "*was* given," "*were* enriched" (R.V.).

Ver. 5.—"The grace," namely this, that "ye were enriched." Note, *in* Him" (R.V.). Cf. Col. ii. 9, "In Him dwelleth all the fulness, . . . and in Him ye are made full." **All utterance, all knowledge.**—How glorious and serviceable, but rare, a combination of gifts! How "enriched" the man, the Church, who can speak in all needed modes of expression, all needed, or possible, phases of divine knowledge!

Ver. 6. **Even as.**—*Q.d.* your enrichment is *after the* glorious *measure and fulness of* the confirmation. **The testimony.**—Whose great, central subject and burden is **Christ. Was confirmed.**—A special instance of Mark xvi. 20. Other cases: Acts ii. 4 (tongues), 43 (wonders and signs), x. 44, 46 (Cornelius), xix. 1-6 (Baptist's converts at Ephesus).

Ver. 7.—*Q.d.* "Whilst ye are, *as the normal attitude of the Christian life*, waiting for" (cf. 2 Pet. iii. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 8; Heb. ix. 28).

Ver. 8.—*It* was confirmed; *you* shall be. Everybody and everything connected with the kingdom of God is "*in power*" (iv. 20). Note, "unreproveable" (R.V.).

"Bold shall I stand in Thy great day;
For who aught to my charge shall lay?"

(Rom. viii. 33). "Shall not come into condemnation" (John v. 24).

Ver. 9.—Same connection of thought as 1 Thess. v. 24, viz. "Because He is faithful, He cannot but finish, by confirming you unto the end, what He began when He called you into the fellowship." **Fellowship of.**—Your common sharing *in* and *with* (Rom. viii. 17) Him. So *of* and *with* are both in Heb. iii. 14. Note the solemn enumeration, at full length, of the names and titles of Christ. Paul a herald proclaiming the names and style of the King his Master.

Ver. 10. "**Fellowship?**"—Then what is this I hear about "divisions"? **Divisions.**—*Schisms.* Not yet four mountains; as yet one mountain with four summits (Evans). **Joined together.**—Medical word ("restore," Gal. vi. 1), as if suggesting, Not yet *cut off* from the body, but *dislocated* in the body. "Let the displacement be reduced, and all brought back to ease and peace."

Ver. 11.—"**I hear**; for, though you have written me about many things (vii. 1), yet you said nothing about this!" **Them of . . . Chloe.**—The bearers of the Corinthian letter? Or residents in Ephesus, who had heard from Corinth? Cannot be decided.

Ver. 12.—"To speak plainly, I say that," etc. **Every one of you.**—"You are all involved, all to blame."

Ver. 13.—**Retain** the question, "Is Christ [the *personal* Christ, not the *mystical*] divided?" For the exact meaning, choose between, (*a*) did each party claim the whole, and sole, possession of Christ? or (*b*) did they, less uncharitably, so rend Him in pieces among them [cf. the connected word used of His garment, Matt. xxvii. 35] as to allow that all did possess a share, but proclaiming their own to be largest and chief? We may hope the latter. But the figure should not be overpressed. **Paul crucified?**—Contrast the holy horror here with the grateful recognition in Gal. iv. 4, "Ye received me . . . as Christ Jesus," *i.e.* "You could hardly have made more of me if I had been Christ Himself." Paul *too* popular with one party!

Ver. 14.—"It so happened that," etc. "God so ordered it that," etc. "I see now why. Thank God, only two of you—yes! [Stephanas and] his family also—can say, "*Paul* baptized me!" **Crispus.**—Acts xviii. 8. **Gaius.**—*I.e.* Caius (Rom. xvi. 23), from whose house the Epistle to the Romans was written and sent. Two men whose conversion was of exceptional importance in the history of the work in Corinth, and so Paul baptized them.

Ver. 16. **The household of Stephanas.** The first souls he won in Corinth; the first handful of his harvest in that field, as he gratefully remembers that "Epænetus my beloved" was in that of Asia Minor (Rom. xvi. 5). No happier memory for a minister than that of his first soul! No wonder that Paul did baptize Stephanas! [*i.e.* presuming that he did; he does not say so expressly].

Ver. 17. **Words.**—Connect or compare with "utterance" (ver. 5) and "word" (ver. 18); same word, in singular number, in all three. **Of none effect.**—Void (R.V.); "emptied" of its power. If the words overlay the cross and hide it, if it be wrapped in, as it were, a non-conducting envelope of "wise" putting and rhetorical expression, the only real power in the message is nullified. (See the Homily for this, and more.) Note, *Are being saved* (R.V.).

Vers. 19, 20.—Isa. xxix. 14 (nearly as LXX.), and a free imitation of Isa. xxx. 18. **For.**—Sustains the *general drift* of vers. 17, 18, not any particular clause. "The cessation of Rabbinical wisdom was to be one of the signs of Messiah's coming; and that this was foretold in Isa. xxxiii. 18 was believed among the Rabbis. (So Stanley.) Also, "The heathen oracles are dumb," silenced since Christ came. Remark, "age" and "world" used together here (in the Greek).

Ver. 21.—Difficult; but probably, "In God's wise ordering of the history of the world and of human thought, the result of all their experiment and inquiry is this: '**An unknown God.**'" Paul came fresh from his address at Athens (Acts xvii. 23) to Corinth. Still, worth considering this reading: "By means of and from the *wisdom* of God displayed in 'the things that are made' (Rom. i. 20) the world did not arrive at knowledge of Him; He now therefore will propose what the world thinks the *folly* of His Gospel of the Cross. Will they know Him through that? They who believe will, and do, and the knowledge is salvation."

Ver. 22.—Notice R.V., "Jews," "Greeks," *q.d.* men of the Jew-type of mind and heart, and of the Greek-type. There are such in all races, religions, ages. **Signs** (from heaven) suit the Oriental, the childlike, emotional type; **wisdom** the Western, harder, manlike, logical type. The Jew wanted to see the finger of God; the Greek wanted to explain all by philosophic theory.

Ver. 24.—*Power* for the Roman ; *wisdom* for the Greek. *Power* and *wisdom*, meeting the moral weakness and moral darkness of the fallen humanity. The age-long experiment of the Jew ended in the knowledge of man's moral helplessness ; that of the Greek race, his moral ignorance.

Ver. 26. **Your calling**.—Choose between, (*a*) "they who called you," and (*b*) "those who are called." Probably the latter. But both are true, and both are included, as particular embodiments of it, in the great fundamental rule which God has followed "in His manner of calling you," viz. "not many," etc. **Not many**.—Always a few, as Crispus. Can almost count, however, the exceptions in the New Testament on one's fingers, and hardly any of them counting for much in the world's estimation.

Ver. 28. **Base**.—Of no special honour of birth. **Are not . . . are**.—"Nonentities," "entities" (Evans).

Ver. 30. **Are ye**.—*Q.d.* "Now were, and still are, nothing and nobody, in the eyes of the world. But before God, and in Christ, you are indeed something and somebody, with a life of important, eternal reality." (See Homily).

Ver. 31.—Jer. ix. 23.

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 1—3.

Observe (I.) **The Twofold Call**: (A) Paul's to Apostleship ; (B) Theirs to Saintship.

Observe (II.) **The Twofold Holiness**: (A) *a.* Ideal, *b.* Relative ; (B) Real.

Observe (III.) **The Twofold Bond of Fellowship**: (A) "Our Brother" ; (B) "That call upon . . . theirs and ours."

Observe (IV.) **The Twofold Blessing, with a Twofold Source**: (A) "Grace and Peace" ; (B) Father ; Jesus Christ.

Vers. 1-3. Observe (I.) **The twofold call**: (A) Paul's to Apostleship ; (B) Theirs to Saintship.—A. 1. He was "separated, even from his mother's womb, and called through God's grace" (Gal. i. 15). "No man taketh," wisely, "*this* honour unto himself," any more than did even the Great Apostle of our profession His Priesthood (Heb. v. 4). How should he run, to any purpose, unless he be *sent*? 2 As we speak, conceiving of God's thoughts and purposes and work with "before" and "after" and "after the manner of men," this call to take up and fulfil Office is a thing more nearly depending upon "the will of God" alone than is the other call to assume and realize and exhibit Character. He seems to give no account of His ways, *e.g.*, in an analogous case, in selecting, using, blessing, and perhaps thus setting aside, one Nation rather than another for some special purpose in His government of the world ; or (*e.g.* Rom. ix.) in choosing to make the Life of the world depend upon the line of Isaac rather than of Ishmael, or of Jacob rather than of the elder Esau ; or why, of all the fishermen in Galilee, Peter, of all the publicans, Matthew, or of all Saul's family circle, himself, should have been selected for pre-eminent apostolate. It often looks as if such call were precedent to all qualification or grace. 3. And yet, not irrespective of natural qualification or grace. (But the "natural" is the ordering of the Author of Nature and the Creator of the individual Man.) Paul was a suitable vessel, as well as "a chosen vessel." Are we to say "chosen" *because* "suitable"? In natural endowment, as well as by providential training, he was the very man to carry the "grace" (Rom. i. 5), and to do the work of an apostle. A thorough Israelite, in mind, and education, and sympathy ; and yet from Tarsus, a Gentile city, where he escaped something of the rigidity and narrowness of Palestinian Judaism, such as would have entirely disqualified him for approaching the Gentile mind and heart ; a noble personal character even before his conversion ; he was made for the work, and was only waiting the conversion and the call and the qualifying Holy Spirit. 4. A call to the ministry always presupposes : (*a*) *Gifts.* Without these natural points of fitness, not even grace can make the best man a successful minister. Given these, the rest is a question

of prayer and hard work. Grace may always be had for the asking (Jas. i. 5: "If any man lack, . . . let him ask," etc.). Conversely, the possession of the gifts may set up a fair presumption that their possessor is designed for their complementary work. He should hold himself in readiness for the definite "call." (*b*) *Grace.* Grace may fail to get married to gifts; they may be divorced through unfaithfulness, sloth, or sin. May not even an apostle fall from his grace? Is there only one Judas, an apostle who never fairly began his special work? The unfathomable mystery of the twin problems of Evil and of Free-will of course lies all around and beneath. But as matter of practical conduct, are there no men designed by natural equipment for apostleship, for the ministry, for honourable and blessed Church office who have turned aside from the "call," or by early giving up self to sin or the world have barred the call which might else have come? Or, short of this, are there none in the Church designed for higher service than what they actually fulfil; who are blessed in their business, but were meant for the ministry; who honour God, and are honoured by Him, but who hold only a second-best place, and receive only a second-best blessing? (*c*) *Fruit.* Have they, upon experiment made, found the natural equipment and the added grace fruitful in "turning (Acts xxvi. 18) some from darkness to light"? If this never follows—though "fruit" is hard to judge of, it is so many-sided, and sometimes so obscure a thing—then there has been a mistake somewhere. A physician of souls, who never heals anybody—however he may be diplomaed—has missed his "calling." (*d*) Happy for the "apostle" if there be the concomitant, complementary, independent, clear calls, within from the Master, and without from the God-directed Church. (See Critical Notes, ver. 1, *supra.*) Happy, if he can say to many, "The seal of my apostleship are ye" (chap. ix. 2). Happy, if the "call" never become to an unfaithful steward of it (chap. iv. 2) a condemnation and a torturing memory.

B. 1. Every call involves in the response to it both Responsibility and Blessing. The call to Office throws up most prominently the Responsibility; the call to Saintship the Blessing. It is a perpetual invitation. Observe in 1 Thess. v. 24, "Faithful is He that—not *called*, but—*calleth* you, who also will do it," viz. "will sanctify you wholly," etc. 2. The call to take up the life of the Christian has always this at the heart of it: "Be ye holy" ["Ye shall be holy"]. But it comes in many shapes, according as the ear and heart are ready, or not, to catch and respond to this, its truest meaning and purpose. To the weary, sin-sick, world-sick, unsatisfied life: "Come to Me; I will give you Rest!" To many a God-fearing Israelite, bound under a yoke of multiplied and vexatious prescriptions, "a yoke which neither he nor his fathers were able to bear" (Acts xv. 10), the Gospel came as a call "to liberty" (Gal. v. 13). And such have their sympathising analogues in every generation. To souls at lower levels and of duller ear the call has to come, thundering, "Escape for thy life! There is 'wrath to come.'" 3. And, as many forms, so many methods, of the call. A friend stricken down by the side of a Luther "calls." The invisible seems suddenly to break in upon a sense-bound, world-narrowed man, he hardly knows how or why. He is looking into an open grave, and finds himself gazing into eternity; he is gazing blankly, stunned, at a letter lying upon his office desk, telling him of a great loss, and even the letter and the immediate loss fade away and disappear; he finds himself, "very inconsequently," pondering, "What shall it profit a man?" etc. He is having one of many, oft-repeated calls. As before a worldling, man or woman, in the very whirl of the world's life, there suddenly rises up a fair and lovely Ideal of a holy life; strangely the heart goes out, approvingly, longingly, toward it. Not always responded to, but *there* is the call. And even the man who responds only to the call of his fears of wrath and hell, finds when he enters upon the new life [and there is no "*seeing*" the

kingdom of God" without "*entering*" it, John iii. 3, compared with 5] that he has begun to "follow" not chiefly after safety and heaven, but "after holiness" (Heb. xii. 14). 4. Every man "had his calling" (chap. vii. 20). The secular station and business is by the call of God, and therefore holy. And conversely, holiness is the calling, the business, of the spiritual life. "A Christian? Yes; but he is not working much at it," is the reason of so many ineffective, unsatisfied Christian lives. They "grieve the Holy Spirit" who calls them, and would help them, to holiness. It is *an* interest of their lives, but should be *the* main interest and business. They are called to be saints; but being saints wants attending to, seriously and diligently, as a holy "vocation." [The preacher may notice and use: (*a*) The distinction between κεκλημένος, *e.g.* Matt. xxii. 3, 4, 8, the Supper parable, and the κλητοί, here and in the similar passage, Rom. i., *ad init.* The κλητοί are the new people of God, the new Israel; their calling being ideally complete. In κεκλημένος (perf. part.) we see the actual, historical calling of individuals being carried on. (*b*) The *calling* is in the root of ἐκκλησία = Church.]

Observe (II.) **The twofold holiness**: (A) *a.* Ideal, *b.* Relative; (B) Real.—(A) *They are sanctified in Christ Jesus*; (B) *They are called to be saints.* A. 1. Every great, leading Idea of Revelation, that of Holiness, like the rest, was revealed "in divers portions and in divers manners." [So God, in the ordering of the historical, physical unfolding of His mind and purpose in creation, led up to Man by preluding hints and anticipatory forms, revealing Man "in divers portions and in divers manners," until at last Adam stood forth the complete utterance of His thought, toward which He had been working all through the ages. Yet He had a still grander Word to speak forth, which is heard, seen, in His Incarnate Son. Perfect, ideal human nature and human life are there (Heb. ii. 8, 9); a sinless Humanity in perfect fellowship with the Divine. All such subsidiary, partial revelations of God's thoughts, as that about Holiness, follow on the same lines, obey the same law of disclosure, because they are really sub-sections of the greater disclosure. Their progressive unfolding is part of the greater progression and unfolding.] He began with a *holiness of relation* to Himself. "Holy" days, not physically in any way different from common days; "holy" ground, not distinguishable from the adjacent soil; "holy" garments, neither finer nor more costly than ordinary ones; a "holiness" which might belong to the firstborn produce of a flock, or a field, or a family, and even to the "brass" of the censers of Korah and his associates;—in all these the "holiness" was only separation, from common use and human ownership, that they might be devoted to the exclusive use and worship of Jehovah. [So, in the Polynesian groups, the order of a chief might make food, or property, or persons, *tabu*, and exclusively for himself.] In the Mosaic code such embodiments and presentations of "holiness" abounded. But this was only an elementary lesson, given to a nation which had barely passed childhood in spiritual knowledge. In the mind of God, to speak humanly, all these looked forward to, were the first steps in a path leading human thought and practice toward a real holiness. Separateness is by no means the only, and the final, meaning of "holiness," in either the Old Testament, or (certainly) in the New Testament. "Separation is here [story of Balaam: 'The people dwelt *alone*'], as throughout the Old Testament, the symbol of sanctity, the outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace, the grace which impels men and women to the pursuit of a pure and unworldly life, and makes righteousness . . . their chief end and highest good" (S. Cox, *Expos.*, 1883, p. 205). [The separateness is the first, and for some time the only, thing our children can see or appreciate about, *e.g.*, the holiness of the Sabbath. The intrinsic value and the deep meaning of the day comes long after, and only fully through the perceptions and experiences of the regenerate life. They, in fact,

begin, each of them, where Israel began centuries ago, and rapidly run through and summarise in their own learning the lessons and the process distributed over centuries in the education of mankind.] "*We* may be made *partakers of His* holiness" (Heb. xii. 10) shows that separateness of a relation to God is not the only or the chief idea, but a personal quality. Historically this is the final point reached in the Revelation of Holiness; really, if we may so speak, it is the first, the full, the originating point, as mapped out in God's purpose. Looking back over the completed series of Divine teachings, we can now see that, starting from the idea of character, a holiness of quality which is like God's own holiness, will, in a fallen world, whose life is affected at every point by sin, inevitably work out in a separateness of conduct and of relation to God. [In what God's holiness consists is a profound question. Is the One Absolute Right, right for all worlds, and ages, and creatures, *and* for their Creator—Truth; the One Absolute Wrong, for Him and them, Falsehood, or as John says, "A Lie"? Can we be made "partakers of His holiness," in any sense in which *He* will be a partaker *with us*, except that of Love, Life, Truth?] 2. Israel was ideally a people both personally holy and relatively holy. In point of fact, the personally holy individuals were very few in any age, and their holiness was often extremely imperfect. Yet the whole nation was "separated" in a hundred ways from all other peoples. It was the "people of" Jehovah's "possession," peculiarly His in a world where all peoples are His. Their King repeatedly saw in them, and in them dealt with, an ideal people, rather than with the actually fickle, rebellious, faithless, idolatry-loving nation. Honours, protection, knowledge, a distinguished regard showing itself in many ways, were given to the real Israel for the sake of the Ideal, and not withdrawn, even in days of deep or widespread national unfaithfulness; not until the time had come for a new Israel, a new "peculiar people," a new "Church" [for the old, hear Stephen, Acts vii. 38], indeed for a new Race to spring from a new, a second Adam. The localisation in one special land was to pass away; the restriction to one special nation was to be abolished; not national birth (John i. 13), but "new birth," birth "of God" [*ib.*], was to be the principle of succession and evolution, as between generation and generation. The new Israel has stepped into the separated position of the old, and stands in the old speciality of relationship. At its most unworthy, worldly, depressed point the Church of Christ is still the separated people of God, "sanctified" as the old was. 3. "In Christ Jesus." As Abraham and his seed through Isaac and Jacob are for many purposes to be regarded and dealt with as a great Unit of reckoning [*e.g.* Heb. vii. 5, 10; Gal. iii. 16 18; and N.B. how Isaiah goes back to this, li. 2], and are "Abraham" in the transaction; so "Christ" stands, a great Unit of reckoning, for Christ and His people, God's new people, sprung from Him, their new ancestor. He and they are taken together (Gal. iii. 16; 1 Cor. xii. 12). His clients are in favour, for His sake, and along with Him. Indeed, they "*are not*," do not count as existing, until they believe "*into* Him" and live "*in* Him." There is no "sanctified" Israel to-day except the persons who are "in Christ." [The relation of Christian baptism to this relative sanctification will come up later, chap. vii. 14.]

B. 1. This is great honour and great responsibility. Each member of it is called to realise in himself the separateness, the relative holiness of the whole; and to realise in his character the likeness to God which underlies the separateness, and without which, indeed, the separateness becomes a mere empty conformity to certain codified restrictions and observances, mostly worthless, unless as expressing or assisting a life within, a conformity which will not long survive the extinction of the life within. "They will go out from us," and merge themselves in the general mass of mankind, laying aside their separateness

and "sanctification," that they may be manifest that they "were not," or had ceased to be, "of us" (1 John ii. 19). 2. The separateness *for* God, and so *from* any use which cannot conceivably be included in life for Him, will be the only sanctification of which *their body* is capable. It is matter, morally neutral; its powers and appetites, necessarily in themselves morally neutral, may equally well be made the "instruments of righteousness" or "of unrighteousness" (Rom. vi. 13). It is for them to see that tongue, or hand, or foot, or eye, or ear, are always ready for use by God, and are never employed for anything incongruous with His mind and law; always held at His service and disposal; always denied to the use of Sin in every shape. The body can only be holy as the brass of the censers was holy. 3. So, too, imagination, curiosity, judgment, reasoning powers, will, etc., may be lent to sin, or may be kept for God. "May,"—they must. "Holiness unto the Lord" must be written across them all, in all their exercise. 4. And all this not merely by means of regulations imposed from without, but in obedience to a new law of life within. The indwelling Holy Spirit will be a new life, and a new power to the will. Love to God will exert "the expulsive power of a new affection," and cast out with growing completeness every opposing motive. The same love will carry with it in willing subjection all the exercise of every faculty, and make all tend toward God; the self-centering of life, which is the highest form of Idolatry [the "Man of Sin" exhibits his culminating wickedness in this: "Himself set forth as God," 2 Thess. ii. 4], will be exchanged for a convergence of every line of feeling and action upon God as Centre and Object and End. "Separated for God" will be the instinctive, inevitable, happy expression of life within. 5. This will be perfect spiritual health, "life which is life indeed," man's life as in the original conception and intention of God in creating Man; and there will be the perfect correspondence between ideal and fact, the perfect self-consistency and internal harmony, which in its highest exemplification is the Truth of God's own Character and Nature. 6. The very fact, then, that a man is of the Church, and "in Christ Jesus" is "sanctified," speaks to him, "calls" to him, reminding Him of God's purpose, and of God's claim upon him. The Spirit, if he will keep an open ear, will be continually reminding him of the significance of his place in the new Israel, and be offering His own instruction, and leading up to a higher and ever higher type of Christian life. [*The very world*, in a way, *calls him to holiness;* for no one is more exacting, more just, in its expectation that Christians should be holy men than they, or has a higher standard of Christian separateness and holiness than the men "of the world."]

Observe (III.) **A twofold bond of fellowship**: (A) "*Our brother*" (*the brother*, Gr.); (B) "*That call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, in every place, their* (*Lord*) *and ours.*"—A. 1. "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," were to our fathers' ears associated with Unbelief and Revolution. Yet they are all, especially the last, ideas derived from the Gospel of Christ. They are not natural to the human heart; when its tendencies reveal themselves in simple openness, they emphasise Self and Class and Pride. The long experiment of antiquity showed that even a common *man*hood in the race was no native idea to the human heart; *brother*hood was unheard of. The *stranger* in old times was, even as a point of vocabulary, also the *enemy*; Pascal remarks sadly on the persistency of the feeling, making this slope of the Pyrenees to be the home of "friends," and the further slope the home of "enemies." Shame that the preachers of Unbelief should have seemed often the louder, bolder preachers of "*Fraternity*," whilst the Church of Christ, in some temporary, local embodiment, seemed to stand by the class distinction, the iniquitous privilege, the wealth as against poverty. If the Church hold its peace, the stones must needs cry out and preach the gospel of "brotherhood." 2. "Barbarian, Scythian, bond, free, circumcision, uncircumcision, male, female, all

one in Christ Jesus," was the keynote of the new social system of Christianity. Neither sex, nor race, nor religion, nor station, carried privilege or prejudice as to *status* before God and access to His saving favour. In the early Church the slave and the master would sit at the same Lord's Supper; it might even happen that the office-bearer was a slave, the private member the freeman. See how honourably prominent women are in the Roman Church, or the Philippian. Paul's letter to Philemon, for the slave Onesimus, "the brother beloved" of his master Philemon, has always been significantly compared with a letter of Pliny the Younger to Sabinianus his friend, on behalf of an offending freed man, as revealing the utterly diverse conceptions of the relation between man and man on which the pagan and the Christian writers rest their pleading. In Philemon all hinges upon "brother." Paul addresses his "brother" Philemon (ver. 20), for *his* slave "brother" Onesimus (ver. 16). Given that a man were a Christian, early Christian literature lets us see him passing from Church to Church, from city to city, with his "letters of commendation" (2 Cor. iii. 1), receiving hospitality, finding every fellow-Christian ready to be his "host," asking and receiving assistance in the business on which he was travelling (Rom. xvi. 1, 3; 3 John 5-8). 3. That Church is losing one of its crowning honours, and losing sight of one of the main points of that Magna Charta of the Kingdom of Heaven, upon which its existence and policy rest, which does not practically work out "a brotherhood" in its membership. Church life must be a Family life, and every member must feel *at home*. However men may be estimated outside, even as between Christian and Christian, within there should be no such invidious recognition of rank or wealth or education as shall prevent worth carrying a man to his true place in the brotherhood and its work and offices and honour. At the Table of the Elder Brother, above all, must all be forgotten but this, "Brother."

B. 1. The physical and mental unity of the race lies deeper than the surface divergencies which a century ago were made to argue multiplicity of origin—many "Adams" for as many great, originally distinct races of mankind. Indeed, the evolutionary drift of most modern science so far sustains Scripture teaching as to insist strongly upon the unity which is the natural basis of "brotherhood." Paul's argument on Areopagus is cogent still (Acts xviii. 26). 2. The moral unity, the oneness of heart and conscience, of sin and moral defect, of aspiration after God, is a yet stronger ground for claiming and according "brotherhood." The same sinful heart in similar conditions brings forth the same crop of sins. The Bible is a universal book; every age and race finds it describe their case with equally correct fidelity. The same Gospel and its remedy awaken the same response, and exhibit the same happy results, in all hearts which give it fair trial. The operation of the soul-medicine is constant in every case. Peter's unanswerable argument justifies still the broadest brotherliness: "God gave them the like gift, as He did unto us" (Acts xi. 17). 3. The "Alliance" and Unity is "*Evangelical*," not merely natural. They come to the same God, using the name of the same Christ. All have their access (Eph. ii. 18) through the same door, by the same "new and living Way." A grand unity! On both sides of "the Pyrenees," in the tents of two opposing armies, in the council-chambers of opposite political factions, in races as widely apart as Esquimaux and Fijian, as Englishman and native Australian, are found men closer together than ever blood-relationship made kindred by nature. Throughout all ages, and races, and countries, and churches, and ranks are distributed men, women, children, with this one mark in common—they use "the name of Jesus Christ our Lord" in prayer. Indeed, they agree in this, and hardly in more than this, that they pray to this one and the same God-man, who died equally for them all, and who lives on the throne of government for not man only, but for

the universe, wearing the nature which belongs to them all. Every man of them feels that his Head is Christ. [Two Christian natives, of different tribes and language, once met at a South African mission station, and found the linguistic barrier insuperable, until one with a bright thought looked up and said, "Jehovah!" The other "caught on," and responded "**Jesus!**" "Hallelujah!" said the first; "Amen," the other. They had then exhausted their stock of *Christian* language, but "**Jesus**" had proved their brotherhood.] The world is every day girdled by a succession of praying hearts, who join the Mahometan, the Jew, the Theist, in drawing near to the same God as they, but who are differentiated from even these fellow-worshippers by this, that they "call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." One Baptism, one Supper, one Prayer, one Mediator, one Object of prayer and worship—**Christ.** [The hymnologies of the Churches, largely common to them all, the identical experiences of all the hearts in them all, who love Christ, vindicate the Church-wide brotherhood. Let them begin to worship, let them begin to talk of the inner life, and they understand each other. Their common bond is "the Name."] "One Christ died for us all. We all live 'in' the one and the same Christ. We all rely on the same Saviour. We all pray to the same God-man. We are diverse enough, to say that we are all 'Christians'; we are not too friendly with each other; but our common convergence upon Him, our common use of His name in prayer, stamps us one; we are 'brethren' of that Brother, 'theirs and ours.'"

Observe (IV.) **The twofold blessing, with a twofold source.**—A. "*Grace and Peace.*"—1. "Grace" is the Greek, Gentile, secular word, originally. "Peace" is the Hebrew, sacred, Biblical word. 2. The free and spontaneous and entirely voluntary character of the bounty lay in the secular use of the Greek word, and fitted it to be a vessel capable of receiving new, Gospel contents and meaning. [Might not God almost have said to the Greek language, "Thou art a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My Name," etc.?] Gospel "grace" originates with God, in the mere self-suggesting love of His heart. There must be no claim upon God, and no merit belonging to man, "otherwise grace is no more grace" (Rom. ix. 6). 3. The whole bounty of God to Mankind is Grace. The distinction between Providence and Grace often drawn, is too sharp and at bottom unreal; at least there is no actual separation in their practical working. God is gracious in His Providence—it is mere undeserved bounty for Christ's sake to a lost race. The purpose of His Providence in our life is not merely or chiefly temporal, immediate relief, convenience, profit, happiness, for even His children; but all these as part of a great scheme of a gracious education in holiness and "conformity to the image of His Son." Every incident of "secular" life is in God's view ethical, in ours is gracious. 4. Thus "grace" is one of the correlatives of "sin," in language and in the facts of our life. It is more than bounty *to need*; it is free, undeserved bounty *to sinners*. 5. The Gift is *one* whole bounty; but we approach it on different sides, we draw upon its contents for the special supply of special needs of our fallen or of our regenerate life; at different stages we appreciate different bearings of its provisions upon our case; we therefore distinguish between grace which freely forgives, and grace which sanctifies, and grace which enlightens or delivers. But really the gift was given *at one giving, when Christ was given.* In a sense the Holy Spirit is *the* grace *par excellence* of the New Covenant; yet the gift of Christ carried this further gift within it. To give the One Comforter involved and carried with it as certain, necessary consequence, *ex*sequence, the gift and coming and indwelling of the Other Comforter. Every operation of this gift upon a sinful heart, first and last, is **grace.** Every fruit of His redemption and of the indwelling of That Other, **grace.** All good, all Godward movement within us, from the first

and faintest to the fullest and deepest going out of a saint's heart after God, all **grace**. The "natural" goodness of so many children, the "natural" goodness in a few heathen, the early tenderness of conscience in those, the more or less of light and moral sense in these, all **grace**, the first workings of the universal gift of the Spirit for the sake of a universal Redeemer. 6. To the fallen race the grace is Redemption; to the individual sinner it may become Salvation; to the Church, at Corinth for example, what? One form of the answer will be "**Peace.**" No Peace, if there had been no grace; no Peace for a soul or a Church, if grace were sinned away and forfeited. The "God of *all* [= all forms of] grace" is for one thing the "God of peace" (1 Pet. v. 10; 1 Thess. v. 23, etc. [where the relation between *corporate* perfectness and peace is very close]). Peace and Grace are "a twofold blessing," but, more profoundly, one.—1. What is "Peace" *to a Church*? When we "pray for the peace of Corinth," what do we ask? A very pregnant word. Two Orientals to this day meet and greet each other with, "Peace be with thee." The "*Salaam*," universal in the East, becomes a word of customary compliment, like that of our own which once was "God be by you." Peace meant all possible well-being to the man saluted. The Saviour bade His disciples cross a house-threshold with the salutation, "Peace be to this house"; and the peace was all possible family good, and all possible personal good to every inmate. Hardly needs saying that "peace" *to a Church* is much more than rest from foes outside and factions within. 2. Peace without sometimes a doubtful blessing. Peace within there must be, or a Church cannot prosper. Zion is always a besieged city. The siege is not always prosecuted with equal vigour, but it is always proceeding. The enemy, never far from the gate, finds his opportunity when the garrison quarrel among themselves. Nothing so much weakened Nehemiah's hands as the traitors within the walls. In the last terrible overthrow of Jerusalem, from the moment that faction and strife amongst the defenders were added to the awful list of horrors which pressed upon the guilty city, capture by the Romans became a certainty. "As much as lieth in you live peaceably with all," is counsel more urgent in regard to our dealings with the Church than even with the world outside. *Peace within* [cf. the factions at Corinth] *indispensable.* 3. Shall ask for *peace outside*, with some reserve. The infant Church of Palestine "had peace, and was built up" (Acts ix. 31). The chief persecutor was converted. The active enmity and attention of other Jews was diverted by some mad doings of Caligula. The Lord of the Church chose outward peace, in view of their weakness, so that in the lull of the storm the new-made converts were instructed and grew strong. Yet when He has chosen to permit persecution and pressure, it has not been unqualified evil. A common danger has drawn men closer together. At such times the unity is more felt after, and made more evident than the diversities. The testing-time sifts out unfaithful members. Faithful ones become more thorough, as a necessity of their own safety. The walls are often built most diligently and securely in "troublous times" (Dan. ix. 5). The Church may not *pray* for it, but many a worse thing for the real peace of a Church may happen than unpopularity or even persecution. There is no peace when the World and the Devil leave the Church alone, *and can afford to do it.* 4. A slumbering city by night is at peace. There is peace of the most profound in the streets swept by plague till not a living soul is left. "Peace" to Corinth must not be slumber or death, but wakeful health and life. A Church may have a peace imaged by the decorous quiet of an English town, once foremost in the country's history and commerce, but now a stranded vessel forsaken by the changed course of the current of modern business or trade; the sluggard peace of honourable history and inherited traditions, of exceeding present-day respectability, but of slow decay. The true peace of a Church is rather the

tumult and throng of busy thoroughfares; of an increasing roll of citizenship; of an eager, active population and a vigorous, honourable record of to-day. 5. The peace of a Church, as of a city, means citizens who have this "peace" at heart; of broad view, of great public spirit, of large heart; ready to put the corporate interest of the Church before their own comfort or convenience or preferences; all, in diverse ways, self-denyingly seeking the good of the whole. 6. Most deeply of all, Peace to a Church means Holiness. Its people are a holy people. Its well-being is the sum total of the well-being of them all. Sin is its, and their, weakness; holiness its, and their, well-being and peace. Wealth may pour into the treasury; influence, of a sort, may be increasingly wielded; even numbers may multiply; and yet upon a Church, as upon a man, God's verdict may be: "There is no peace to the wicked." For a sleeping, dead, indolent, apathetic, unholy Church there is always the peril that "the things which belong unto its peace should be" for ever "hid from its eyes" (Luke xix. 42).

B. *The "Father," and "Christ."*—As the *twofold* blessing is fundamentally *one* blessing, so the *twofold* source is fundamentally *one* Divine Source. 1. In the fullest form of the Pauline salutation we have "grace, *mercy*, and peace" (1 Tim. i. 2). In the earliest we have "grace and peace" only, without even the indication of their source (1 Thess. i. 1.) An interesting piece of doctrinal development for our study; as though, with ripening years, and ever fuller knowledge and clearer insight—the Spirit of God presiding over the process of mind and heart, guiding into real, if partial, truth at every stage, adding detail, filling up the earlier outline, completing the revelation in its historical disclosure, as the letters of the apostle's last days are written—Paul had at last found a formula which was adequate to contain all he could ask, all God could give in Christ, to His beloved "children" and converts. Perhaps, also, one may see the Spirit of God making the ripe, final, fullest form of a Christian wish, or prayer, a not uncertain echo of the threefold high-priestly formula of benediction (Num. vi. 24-26), and impressing upon it—as in some Epistles, notably the Ephesian, it is impressed upon the very form of whole paragraphs and their underlying thought—the significant threefold form, so wonderfully persistent all along the course of Revelation, and belonging to the worship of the angels and the Church in heaven also, as well as to the experience and theology of the Church on earth. 2. Yet it would be overpressing the words of Scripture to allot Grace to the Father, Mercy to the Son, Peace to the Spirit. And here the two members of the one clause do not so correspond to the members of the other clause, as that Grace should come through the Father and Peace through Christ, exclusively in either instance. The "Grace of God" and the "Peace of God" are, equally, Scriptural, guiding, terms. The Son is invoked as the source of Grace in the concluding benediction of our two Corinthian letters. 3. The old theologies spoke of an "Economical," or a "Redemptional," Trinity. They were endeavouring to express the all-important, much-solving truth that we see Father and Son [and Spirit] not in their absolute, internal, relationships—a veil scarcely ever lifted lies upon those—but in their united working, and distinctly apportioned departments, so to speak, in effectuating the Redeeming purpose of the Grace of God toward a lost world. The Son is carrying out the will of Him that sent Him "about His Father's business"; He is humbling Himself to be the channel, the essential condition, through which alone the grace of God can take blessed effect upon a sinner's heart. Communication between God and man is opened up in Christ, and in Him only. [This the true point of the "So" in John iii. 16, which is not "so much," "so greatly," but "thus," in this manner: "God loved the world, and loved it *thus*, viz. *that He gave* . . . , in order that the love might mean eternal life to every man believing in

Him." All God's communication with mankind has presupposed His grace, His loving, spontaneous, active goodwill to them. It is in the background of every approach towards man from His side. And the grace has reached us, can only reach us, through one conduit and channel—Christ. All starts and originates in grace. Peace, like every other expression of this basal grace, has reached us through Christ. 4. If a man therefore refuse Christ, or neglect Him, he can never see peace. This not as any arbitrary, isolated decision of God in his particular case, but because he puts away the Indispensable Condition of communication between God and man. He breaks down or refuses the only bridge over the gulf between them. He shuts the only door against himself, or seeks to find or make some other rather than this. We hardly know how to say that the Son conveys to a soul, or a Church, grace which is the bounty of the Father. The very co-ordination here, the two bracketed, as it were, under one "from," forbids that. 5. Consider the place which Jesus of Nazareth has come to take, by this early date, in Christian language, thought, life. Could we conceivably associate thus any creature, were he never so exalted, as in any sense the giver of grace and peace concurrently with the Father, Jehovah?

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 1—10.

A. **"To me to" write "is Christ."**—So we might make Paul say, almost on the strength of this paragraph. George Whitefield once said, toward the end of a letter to some correspondent, on some indifferent or business topic, "I must have something of Christ in all my letters," and thereupon proceeded to subjoin some religious talk. How these verses *bristle with* "The Name" (3 John 7, R.V.). The lines are embroidered, wrought throughout, emblazoned, with the name. The Epistle closes in a white-heat of passionate, intolerant devotion to Christ (xvi. 22). Here we might not have supposed that Paul had yet "warmed to his subject." But he never needs "warming" to this subject. He is ready at a moment's notice, not only to break out into thanksgiving (ver. 4), but to mention his Master's name. Or without notice, for it is the instinct and habit of his thought. The page is emblazoned with "The Name," and indeed with the names. Paul is an ambassador (2 Cor. v. 20) introducing his business with a proudly solemn and stately announcement, in all due and ceremonious form, of the style and titles of the King who sends him. Paul is the bearer of the mind and will of a Son—God's Son,—a Son unique of this sort,—whose full name and style is, "Jesus—Christ—His Son—His Only Son—Our Lord." "Take notice of my Master's name!" ["My God," in comparison with the stately array of names and titles of his Master, seems quite homely, and touchingly, trustfully, familiar.] No wonder that the clever wit-mongers, the Antiochians, hit off so happily in their nickname the characteristic of these Nazarenes. Their preachers were ever talking of some one known amongst themselves and their hearers as "Christ"; you could not listen long to their utterances before His name occurred in their discourses. Did men overhear two of these strange people conversing together in the street, or anywhere else, they were sure before very long to bring in His name. [Cf. the Rabbinical rule: "Let not two Israelites meet and separate without a word about the Law."] He seemed always a topic welcome to their lips. What should they be called? The Antiochians would surely not let them go long without a *sobriquet*; it would be a reflection on the reputation of their city to let these people slip by unnamed. "Call them '*Christ*ians'!" Here Christ is in all; touches all; the whole Church, each individual member; every gift; all the fellowship; and gathers up to Himself all hope and desire. Past, Present, Future, all are linked with Christ.

B. I. **The Past was full of Him.**—As they look backward along the perspective of the Past they see that with Him all the lines of present life and blessing have originated. He is their radiant point. From the first, all the "*grace*" and gifts which now so *enrich* them, that they "*come behind in no gift*," were all long ago given "*in Him*" (ver. 4). Potentially every gift was in that first Unspeakable Gift" (see under 2 Cor. i. 20).

II. **The Present is full of Him.**—1. *He is the basis and bond of their fellowship.*—Besides the great, deep cleft yawning between Jew and Gentile, there were divisions of race dividing Gentile from Gentile; divisions of sex; divisions of station, slave from master, poor from rich: but out of this medley material a new Unity was being created, a new Communion, "*The Fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*" Outside of Him they may either be separate and independent units, or may group themselves on other lines or round other *nuclei* of opinion or object in life. Their common relation to Him gives them a relation to each other. "Friends of the same Friend are friends of one another" here, though on all other grounds they be strangers from the ends of the earth. Only in the One whose manhood was, in the truest sense, of no nationality, though He sprung from one special branch of the great human family—only in the One who was so entirely "The Son of Man" that no race, no sex, no rank, no age, has ever felt Him a Jew, or alien from itself—could there be a basis for a world-wide fellowship. Only such a Brother and Redeemer of all men alike, could draw together and hold together the diverse elements which were included within the sacred circle and family bond of the "*fellowship.*" Take the Second Adam away, the new Race, the new Humanity, the Church, resolves itself into its units again, with their isolation and perhaps their antagonisms. Their fellowship is realised as they worship. The world over, prayer and praise are going up to God, the Great Object of worship; but Christian worship converges to the throne through one Door and Avenue of approach—Christ. The *differentia* of Christian worship, its "note" of unity amidst all its diversity, is that "*all in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.*" Christian worship, all Christian intercourse with God, passes through Him. He has made it possible.

2. *He is the beginning and the continuance of their holiness.*—They were sanctified "*in Him*," with a relative holiness, from the beginning, and all realisation of this ideal, all their "*confirmation*" in their holy *status*, is distinctly His work (ver. 8). And this stands closely connected in fact with another "*confirmation*," that of "*the testimony of Christ.*" The strength is from no outward support merely or chiefly, but from within. [The weak spine may be "confirmed" by the iron supports strapped on outside the patient's body. The best "confirmation" would be that within, the strengthening of the spine itself.] They stand strong, four-square to all blasts, firm amidst all assaults, until "the End" (xv. 24, perhaps), not alone, nor most of all, because He directly and from without upholds them, but because within them "*the testimony is confirmed.*" Every point of the witness, both of the Holy Spirit and of Apostles, concerning Christ is verified in their experience. They *know* that He is a Saviour, and Divine, for He is that to them. There is no promise, implied or expressed, whose root is in Him, which they may not prove, and are not proving, to be true. They stand "*confirmed*" because they take Him to be "Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, Redemption" (ver. 30). In the fullest sense they find the pledges of His very Name, "**Jesus**," abundantly redeemed, and are kept with a continuous Salvation. The external testimony answers point by point to the internal experiences. It is "*confirmed* **in**" them by the very same facts of grace which together make up their "*confirmation*" also. There is no believer in Christianity like the man in whom its great

facts have become experiences. Ought we to say that there is no real believer in Christianity except such a man? And the testimony is "*of Christ.*"

3. What *Paul* and his fellow-workers *had to offer to Corinth and the world* was *a* "*testimony.*"—They were witnesses, not philosophers; reporters, not authors; they handed on what was first given to them, and did not propose for acceptance what they had themselves in any sense devised. It is true that the testimony has passed through their own mind; each of them puts his own individuality upon the form of delivery; each of them is entrusted with only part; to some is given more than to others, but to each probably just that which he could naturally best appreciate. [The burner gives its own size and shape to the jet of burning gas which it passes. The jet of the fountain also gives shape to the stream of water issuing from it. A group of burners, passing out the gas from one common supply-pipe, will give each its own shape and size of flame, whilst contributing to the one light. (Such illustrations are of course not to be pressed far).] Yet they are witnesses, and no more. As to the great fundamental, historical facts in which Christianity rests, they speak as bearing testimony. When they preach doctrines which are the superstructure upon or the consequences of, the facts, these are not their own inferences, or deductions, or speculations. They are reporters of what the Spirit of God has told them. This narrowed range of work and function—simply witness-bearing—was their strength; as it is still the strength of the preacher and worker. Every great religious awakening affords many examples of the power of testimony, even when that testimony is nothing more than the story of the speaker's conversion and his "present experience." It has often been from rude lips a mighty power with cultured people. The facts of the Gospel story, told with freshness and reality, and with the power of the Spirit of God, have, from Pentecost onwards, been very effective preaching,—the most effective. Christian speculation has its time, and place, and value. There is a philosophy of Christianity. But the working force, the real lever-power, of it lies in its "*testimony.*" That "*confirmed*" "*confirms*" Christians. Noteworthy is the summary of all Apostolic messages: "the testimony *of Christ.*" Comparing this with ii. 1, "the testimony *of God*," we are guided to the conclusion that in the latter case God is regarded as the Proprietor and Source, in the former Christ is regarded as the great Subject. Indeed, as the One Subject; for He summarises the Gospel. All its topics are "broken lights" of Him. He is *the* Topic. A scheme of doctrine, a sermon from a Christian pulpit, which does not clearly show the relation of any and every topic to Christ, is not a Christian scheme or a Christian sermon. [That is no *Christian* religious life in which He is not central.] As a matter of notorious, and often verified, result a "Christianity" (if it borrow the name) whose Christ is not Divine, and therefore not the dominating Name and influence a Divine Person must of necessity be, is not a Christianity that moves the world, though for a time it may give satisfaction to a few. The men who move the masses and "*confirm*" the Church are "witnesses," and witnesses who report what they see and know in Christ. They exhibit *Him.* He is the great Subject of all that preaching which is the instrument of strengthening the religious life.

III. **The future is full of Christ.**—1. *He is the convergent point of all the perspective of the years to come.*—At the end of the vista of the personal life, His people see Christ. They "depart and are with Christ." And the end of the vista of history is to them the blaze of the glory of His "*revelation,*" and the dread solemnities of His "Day." The "*call*" of the Past was into fellowship in Him. The "*confirmation*" of the Present is in Him. The "*waiting*" for the Future turns toward Him. [Is the "Revelation" for His people, His "Day" for His enemies?] The "Day of Christ" is, most broadly stated, a

*period* with its historical contents, extending from His first Coming to His second. Within it are several subsidiary "days of Christ," each of which reproduces in miniature the features of "the Day" on the largest scale. Hence what is true of the whole "Day of Christ,"—which is also a continuous "Revelation"—was true of the historical Advent and its day, which began the larger "Day"; and will be true of the "Day," specially so called, which closes the period. In the course of it are episodes, special incidents or events, each of which is a real "coming" and "revelation" of Christ, and marks a "day of the Son of Man." His "revelations" and "days" have all of them three characteristics: *Scrutiny* ["The thoughts of many hearts shall be revealed," (Luke ii. 35)]; *Judgment, i.e.* judicial discrimination of, and verdict on, character and conduct, inevitable in, and from, the moment that men, or churches, or nations, or systems, come into contact with Christ, their touchstone [John ix. 39]; *Sentence*, a feature only slightly emphasised as yet, but to be the prominent one of the latest "Day of Christ."

2. *To His people His "revelation" is a Dawn.*—There are mysterious, perplexing hints of a darkest hour before that dawn. [*E.g.* Luke xviii. 8; 2 Thess. ii. 3.] It is confessedly difficult to arrange the scattered intimations in Scripture as to the sub-final days of the present Age, into any coherent, consistent programme; as difficult as it would have been for even the prophets of fullest knowledge and largest illumination in Old Testament days to have drawn up from the body of Old Testament intimations any programme of the First Advent of Christ. We are in their position: "Searching what or what manner of times the Spirit . . . did signify" when He gave the New Testament prophetic indication as to the future, the "*Revelation*" and the "Day." The relation between even these two great facts is obscure. If the problem had not been as yet insoluble, the pains and learning spent upon it would long ago have resulted in some solution in which all, or most, expositors would have been agreed. Practically the Church has, age after age, "*waited for the revelation*," as the individual waits day by day for death. It is an event certain, but the time of it unknown. A constant preparedness for it is cultivated, and, this made sure, the man—and the Church—go steadily on with the daily tasks, "doing what the hand finds to do," and doing it "with their might." The end, whether to the man or the Church, must be reckoned with as of urgent present importance, even though in fact it may only come after long delay. It is ever impending, though it may be long before it falls; and this not only keeps a helpful fear awake, but keeps hope and expectation and desire in active exercise. The "*waiting*" has all these elements in it. The sinner may well stand in dread at the resistless, untarrying, sure approach of "the Day"; like the wretch in the condemned cell "waiting for" the day of the executed sentence. The Christian man "loves the Appearing" of his Lord. His eye is ever turning to the quarter from which his help shall come; he is ever—as the Church also has been doing for ages—looking with eager gaze for the first sign of the breaking of that day, when the glory of His revealing shall burst in upon the unbelieving, persecuting, daringly blasphemous, world [2 Thess. ii. 8], and the Lord and His people shall together stand revealed in their true and native glory as "sons of God." All his highest aims and work will then enter upon their eternal fulfilment; all his best hopes will then begin their eternal realisation. No wonder they "*wait.*"

3. *No wonder that "the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" is Paul's strong ground of appeal.*—The common hope, the common Lord, make them more closely one than does any other bond which holds men together. They understand each other with a deep, quick instinct, such as no other, no natural, community of sympathy and interests creates. There is no rallying point like this; none like

*Him.* Speak His name, and it should awaken the harmonious response of heart to heart, where all are first tuned to respond to It. "Brethren, do you split into your parties? Do you cherish and foment your antagonisms? *Brethren*! BRETHREN! Do you forget that you are all His together, that you are all together pledged to Him; that you are looking forward together to His 'revelation'? You to be divided, who are redeemed by the same blood of the same Lord Jesus Christ? You, who are together '*sanctified in*' the same Christ, '*enriched in*' Him; who '*call*'—as none others do—'*upon His name*'; you, whose whole life, through and through, is '*Christ*'?" Surely to mention "The Name" ought to hush all party clamour, ought to make them close up all party rents and schisms, and "*join them perfectly together in the same mind and the same judgment.*" If the spell of The Name do not act, nothing will. If it be the uplifted banner, then round it should gather a compactly united host; too earnest, too thoroughly one, for even partisan "sparring in the ranks."

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 10—17.

I. **There may be an over-valuation of men [ministers].**

II. **There may be an over-valuation of baptism [representative in this, perhaps, of Christian ordinances generally].**

I. **Men over-valued.**—1. *All these deserved much* esteem and consideration and affection at the hands *of the Corinthians.* Certainly Paul did, and his successor Apollos. To these, particularly to Paul, very many of the Corinthians "owed their own selves also" (Philem. 19). No other man can ever take quite the same place in a Christian's memory and affection as does he who led him to the light, and to Christ. It is no wonder that the man who finds the ministrations of an Apollos—"eloquent, and mighty in the Scriptures," and greatly filled with the Spirit—to be very effectual in the sustaining and education of his religious life, should set his Apollos on a high place in his thought and prayers and love. The grateful, intelligent love of those to whom a ministry is a perpetual grace and assistance, is a help to the minister himself, and a reward not to be despised, next to the smile of his Master. Even Cephas did a real and glorious work for the Church; in many respects complementary to that of Paul. No need to exalt Paul by disparaging Peter. All this affectionate, loyal bonding of ministry and people is a great blessing and a great help to both preacher and people. Paul very gratefully remembers in Galatia, with a remembrance not without a pang as he thought of the manifest and rapid change, "Ye received me . . . as Christ Jesus" (Gal. iv. 14). If, that is, he had been the Master instead of the servant, he could scarcely have had a warmer welcome. [This loyalty and affectionate devotion may, similarly, and within the same limits, rightly be extended to the special branch of the Christian Church to which a man owes the awakening and the cultivation of his spiritual life. And, by a very natural application of the same principle, the special form of "Gospel," or the special type of Truth, "under" which a Christian man has grown up to his present knowledge and strength of Christian character, may well call forth and gather to itself a devotion of grateful support, until a man proudly and affectionately ranges himself under the denominational banner of Calvin or of Wesley, of Cephas or of Paul.]

2. *But they were receiving more than their due;* though probably Cephas was as blameless as were Paul and Apollos, and not more responsible for the sinful partisanship which chose his name for its banner, than were they for the use made of their own. Certainly not even Gal. ii. gives any warrant for supposing any sort of personal feeling between the two men. That the Galatians should

have welcomed Paul almost as if he had been Paul's Lord, was one thing; that the Corinthians should exalt and fight for him or for any other human teacher as if it were for the very Lord Himself, was quite a different matter. It had been innocent and natural affection which, with a stretch of language easily understood, he had recalled so gratefully when writing to the Galatians. The partisan devotion which he so strongly rebukes at Corinth was such as could hardly have been greater if (*horrescit referens*) Paul himself were their crucified Saviour, or if their baptism had pledged them to him in covenant bond.

3. *It was idolatrous.*—No, there is but one HEAD and KING, ruling over all alike; "*Christ is not divided.*" There is but one PRIEST, He who is Priest and Victim, Ambassador and Intercessor, in unapproachable, incommunicable, dignity; "*Paul is not crucified for them.*" There is but one Teacher, into obedience to whom they were baptized; Paul and the rest are only teachers at secondhand, witnesses, reporters, of what they have first heard from Him. The special theological system of one's Church, the favourite, or distinguishing, doctrine of one's best-loved teacher, must not be exalted into unchallengeable, Divinely authoritative, dogma. It must always be held subject to its accordance with the teaching of the Highest Authority. Neither over the intellect nor over the conscience has any man the final authority which belongs to Christ alone, speaking in the Word and through the Spirit. And if belonging to any particular Church, or accepting its creed, and "sitting under" its orthodox ministry, should subtilely become to the soul almost a ground of hope or even of assurance of salvation, it would go perilously near to trusting in a "*Paul crucified.*" A faithful and wise minister of Christ will point his people to Christ and away from himself; he will stand clear of everything like strife and partisanship, even though he be innocently the cause of it, and an exaggerated desire to honour him be the occasion; he will keep the great object of his calling steadily in view, and not even "*baptize,*" if that be made to mean too much by over-zealous and very ill-advised friends (vers. 13-17). [One's Church and one's creed in like manner must be helps to Christ, and may not arrest on the way, and detain for themselves, devotion and allegiance which belong of right to Christ alone.] [Note how the Baptist was content to be nobody—only "a Voice." "Listen to me, but look at Him; go to Him. Behold the Lamb" (John i. 23, 36). "We preach Christ Jesus as the Lord; ourselves as your servants" (2 Cor. iv. 5).] [Note also that there may be a partisanship "*for Christ,*" forsooth, which is as narrow and unholy as that for Paul or Apollos.] [*Allegiance to Christ unites the Church* (ver. 10); *allegiance to man divides it.*]

**II. Baptism over-valued.**—The possibility of this is a matter of inference from what Paul states had been his own line of action. That man may be over-valued is matter of direct assertion. But it may be fairly gathered from his own declaration that he very rarely baptized a convert, that to him the ordinance did not occupy the place which some would give it—a thing necessary to salvation, and only to be administered by a man belonging to a special order. [Peter did not himself baptize the souls he had gathered in the house of Cornelius. "*He commanded them* to be baptized" (Acts x. 48). Indeed, they were hardly of his ingathering at all; the Spirit fell upon them and did His work, before Peter had scarcely more than begun his address (ver. 41).] For an incidental and purely personal reason, indeed, Paul actually "*thanks God*" that not many at Corinth could say that his hands had administered baptism to them. *It must not be under-valued.* Paul would not have left his converts unbaptized altogether. From no New Testament writer do we learn better and more fully the covenant theology which underlies baptism, and especially that of the children. It must neither be exalted into a necessary means of a real

salvation, nor emptied of all significance except that of a mere dedicatory service with an element of thanksgiving. "*Baptized into the name of Paul*" (like "baptized unto Moses," x. 2) would, if such a thing had been possible, have meant much more than that. The startling suggestion of such a parallel case may serve to expound what "baptized in the name of Christ" would mean to Paul. Every Jewish, or Mahometan, or heathen, father understands very well that to allow his child to be baptized means more than a simple dedication to the God of the Christian worship. Between the Lord of the Covenant and the subject of the ordinance it sets up a covenant bond, binding on both sides, officially recognising the rights, and (so to speak) registering the claim, of the baptized one to all the grace of the Christian scheme. The Master had said, "Go ye and make disciples . . . baptizing them . . . teaching them," etc. *Both are obligatory.* But at least Paul clearly ranked the teaching before the ordinance, if for any reason (as was, in fact, the case at Corinth) choice must needs be made. He relied for the fulfilment of the "marching orders" of the Church, for the execution of his own part of the work, rather upon securing the response of the intelligence and heart to the instruction and appeal of the preacher. A *mere* baptism of the unconscious infant or the indifferent adult, and much more the wholesale baptism of Saxons or Indians, are no fulfilment of the Church's commission. No ordinance, however binding, or significant, or precious and really helpful, can take the place of such a "*preaching of the Gospel*"—in all the round of that by no means "simple" function !—as secures the attention, and wins the assent, and conquers the heart.

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 18—31.

Grouping the topics of the paragraph around ver. 29, we have :—

**I. A great principle of God's government consistently carried out. God alone must be exalted.**—1. In threefold reiteration here. "*That no flesh should glory,*—or literally, "*that all flesh should not glory,*"—"*in His presence*" ("before God," better reading, ver. 29); "*He that glorieth . . . in the Lord*" (ver. 31); and the triumphant laugh in the face of the world's wisest ones, "*Where is the wise?*" etc. (ver. 20). Paul stands by the cross of "the Lord of Glory," and casts his exultant glance around. The Cross of Christ has been planted, like God's Royal Standard, in the midst of the battle-field. Now the field is clear. Beaten, discomfited, discredited, by God's "*foolish*" method, the competing "*wisdoms of the world*" have vanished, or are vanishing, leaving the cross of Christ in possession ! [So in the Day of Questions, the last day of the Lord's public ministry, every typical world's-wise-man assailed Him. But He held His own, and one after another slunk away beaten, until at last He Himself completed the rout by turning questioner, and finally silencing every opponent with His problem about David's Lord and David's Son (Matt. xxii.).] 2. The Old Testament origin of Paul's quotation, here and in 2 Cor. x. 17 (from Jer. ix. 23, 24), carries back the principle into the earlier dispensation, and shows that the Spirit guided him with a sure and right instinct to lay his hand upon a great and perennially valid principle of all God's rule and administration of His government; one that must obtain wherever there are creatures capable of knowing Him. In no world can it be conceived that this great law should not be in force. He is the One and Only Being who can make Himself the centre and object of all intention and activity, and who can claim that all other life than His own should converge upon Him as its Object and End and Goal. In us such self-centering is of the very essence of Sin; it is our root-rebellion against our God. It is a prime and simple necessity of His position and character and very Being. To

ask less, to permit less, to man or to any other creature, were to abdicate His position as God. The Bible sets Him forth abundantly full, full to the overflow, of love; His mercy is eagerly ready and "forward" to bless; the first advance to union between Himself and sinners has always come from His side. His ear is always open to the cry of the feeblest, bowing Himself to the man of contrite and trembling heart; indeed, loving to "dwell with" such a man (Isa. lvii. 15, lxvi. 2). Yet the condescension is never exhibited at the expense of the majesty. "He is God and none else. His honour will He not give to another." To compare great and small, and with all reverence: men hear from time to time of our Queen performing acts of kindly condescension and of simple womanly kindness, to the sick and poor and aged. But if any presumed upon this to exercise undue familiarity as to an equal, she would be the first to draw back. To allow another on some state occasion to occupy the throne in her presence, would not be condescension, but abdication. The Creator and the creature can never with His consent even seem to change places. The world's "wisdom" is rooted in the pride of human nature in itself and its powers of discovery. No field can be supposed beyond its exploration; no height, or depth, or vastest extension of truth, but it can take in all. If God hide Himself, then there is no God; this wisdom can find none. If His ways pass its systematisation, or do not commend themselves to the world's judgment or "moral sense," they are evil or folly. Over all that pride of intellect He must win a victory. To men the perpetually attractive temptation is, "Ye shall be as God, knowing . . ." Human intellect must lower its high-borne pennon in the presence of the Royal Standard of God's wisdom. The proud intellect which will acknowledge neither limitation nor error, the proud heart which will own no weakness or sin, must alike bow in the presence of God. It is *true of the whole arrangements for the spread of the Gospel*; it is *true of the provisions in the Gospel for the salvation of the individual sinner.*

II. **Seen in the arrangements for the spread of the Gospel.**—1. Hardly necessary to point out the *once current, customary misconception* of Paul's words, "the foolishness of preaching." Even an English reader of the R.V., with its margin, may now see that the "*folly*" lay in the matter of the preacher's message, and not at all in that particular method of delivering it (ver. 21). *Virâ voce* instruction and appeal is one of the aptest methods of winning attention and securing conviction. For appeal, whose aim is to secure immediate results, whether of conviction or action, the living voice of the man speaking face to face with his fellow has better prospect than the writer, whose written or printed page lies cold and silent before, perhaps, a listless eye. Every true preacher is, first of all, a public speaker; the natural basis upon which is superinduced his special grace, is the same as that of the speaker upon any secular theme, the lecturer, the parliamentary orator, the very demagogue. He will cultivate it, as part of its consecration, and will learn his very art in order that he may the better win the ear of his listeners, and thus find for his Master a way to their hearts. God has often glorified Himself by using "very poor speakers" to deliver His message. Wisdom of "words," if made by preacher or hearers a thing aimed at for its own sake, or for the applause it may bring and the pleasure it may give, may "make the Cross of none effect" (ver. 17). Yet *foolish preaching* is no thing to praise or value, or (as it were) to cultivate. The speaker will seek to be at his best, for God. But all this is quite away from any thought of Paul here. Any supposed "poor preaching" is not, in itself, one of the illustrations of God's method which he adduces.

2. *The message itself seemed foolish.*—"Jews" and "Greeks" (ver. 22) are not only historical names, but *generic and typical.* There are always "Jews" and "Greeks" amongst the men to whom any Paul addresses himself, in every

age, in any country. They are two variants of the natural mind, under the influence of the natural heart. And we "*who are called*" (ver. 24), and have made the "call" a reality [see the tense, as compared with that in ver. 2], both from our memory of the old days in our own life, and from the very nature of the case, can see how "*foolish*" the "*preaching of the Cross*" must seem to such. Here is proposed for man's acceptance a system of "truth" whose Teacher is a man hanged publicly on a gibbet, on a thing whose whole associations were those of our gallows, but aggravated in their painfulness and shame. "*We are being saved*" by it (ver. 18), and know its "*wisdom*" and its "*power*." To us they are worthy of God; they carry their own credentials. But "*to those who are perishing*" such a story may well seem "*foolishness.*" Apart from the power of the Holy Ghost in it (ii. 4), it would be a message with which to send men only on a fool's errand. To tell the Roman masters that the hope of the world was in a Jew, rejected by His own people, hanged publicly on a gallows by a Roman quaternion and their centurion, at the instigation of Jewish religious authorities,—Gallio well reflected the temper with which the best of them would receive such a tale. He cared nothing indeed for the rioting; he could afford to ignore a petty Jewish squabble, though under his very eyes. But the same lofty, "gentlemanly," if not supercilious, contempt would have been his answer—a Roman answer—if the "*preaching of the Cross*" had been fairly submitted to him for his judgment. The Jew was stung to the quick when Pilate's "title" seemed to offer to the nation a crucified peasant of Galilee as its King and Messiah. The "*Jew*" of all ages who wants "*signs*," who demands, in order to belief, unmistakeable self-disclosures of the Unseen, Supernatural, Order, who wants to see his God, will hardly bear to be pointed to Jesus of Nazareth crucified. "*Such foolishness!*" The "Greek," looking for his Ideal Man, feeling after God, requiring of everything proposed to him for acceptance that it shall fit into some beautifully ordered, symmetrical, closely articulated scheme of philosophic thought, was hardly to be won to attention by this story of a Divine Man dying on a gallows. *That* the supreme revelation of God? *That* the supreme form of the Beautiful, the True, the Good? On Mars' Hill attention ended in an explosion of mocking laughter (Acts xvii. 32). "*Foolishness!*" Sensible men, not to say philosophers, to give serious attention to such a story! Not even the learning of Paul, or the eloquence of an Apollos, could make such a story anything else but a "folly" and a stumbling-block. If it kept the field, then, and drove out all competitors, there must be something in it not of man. The most successful preacher "*may not glory in His presence.*" "This is the finger of God."

3. *Look at the men who bore it.*—(For they are fairly included in the unfinished sentence of ver. 26. R.V. margin is not too broadly comprehensive. What was true of the first converts was true also of the first preachers.) They were not reclaimed reprobates, indeed; nor by any means wanting in native common sense or shrewdness. Their "baseness" (ver. 25) only means that they had no advantage from what with men gives *prestige*. Yet manifestly they were not the men whom human wisdom would have chosen to confront the "*scribe*" of the Jew, or the "*disputer*" of the Greek market-place (Acts xvii. 18). Men would not have chosen the equivalent of a little company of Whitby or Peterhead fishermen, with a farm labourer or two, and a subordinate collector of Customs, even though joined afterwards by a graduate of the theological school of a small and uninfluential sect, to be the men to clear away religions deeply rooted in the popular life, or consecrated by hoar antiquity. Paul was the best educated of them all, yet his strictly "Hebrew" home (Phil. iii. 5), though in the Greek city of Tarsus, would not permit to him much acquaintance with any ordinary secular literary knowledge, and his learning

was mainly in that Rabbinic lore which seems to us, as it would to his Gentile contemporaries, so largely trivial, and indeed often contemptible. Humanly speaking, he was by no means the man to put forward as the best representative of the new faith, to discuss it on Mars' Hill, or in the Agora of Athens, with the heirs of the philosophy of Socrates and Plato and Aristotle. From the standpoint of human prudence, it would have seemed to be the very best method of handicapping the message and lessening its chances of reception, to commit it to such men as its apostles and promulgators. Precisely. But God's foolishness was God's way. Such "weak" and "base things" put the world's wisdom and strength and prestige to shame. The success justified the method, and justified the use of such messengers of the cross. And the method obviously secured this end, that "*no flesh*"—certainly not the successful messengers themselves—"*should glory before God.*"

4. *Look at the first converts.*—In Corinth even the "chief ruler of the synagogue," the Crispus whom Paul had the joy of receiving as a Christian, soon after he had transferred his labours to the house of Titus Justus, was a man of no account except amongst the Jewish community. The Gentile mob dragged before Gallio his successor in office, Sosthenes, with very scant respect. A few converts may have been won from the descendants of the Roman colonists with whom the city had been repeopled. But, as usual, the artisan and the slave, the small trader and the sailor, would form the bulk of the Corinthian Church. It is just one of the touches of "*foolishness*" in God's plan that, though the "*noble, the mighty, the wise after the flesh*" need the Gospel of the Cross as much as do the "*foolish, and weak, and base,*" its reception has seemed to be made distinctly more difficult for them than for others. The exceptions in the New Testament to Paul's statement are few. In Philippi the first to be won for Christ were a purple-seller and a gaoler, not the magistrates. Jerome boasted in after years (on Gal. iii. 3), "Ecclesia Christi non de Academia, et Lycæo, sed de vili plebecula congregata est" (Farrar *L. of Chr.*, i. 197). But it was long a standing matter of scorn that the adherents of the new faith were almost exclusively from lower grades of society. Not that the Gospel has any republican prejudice against, or dislike for, the rich or the aristocratic. ["*Not many,*" but always some. "How I thank God," Lady Huntingdon used to say, "for the letter *m*! If it had been '*not any*'!"] The exceptions to Paul's statement in the New Testament can almost be counted upon one's ten fingers. But the exceptions are there. [And possibly the *percentage* of the "*wise and noble*" has been as great as that of the far more numerous lower classes.] The Gospel met the case of Nicodemus; of Sergius Paulus, the proconsul of Cyprus; of Dionysius, a judge of the sacred court on Areopagus; of Erastus, the city-treasurer of Corinth itself (Rom. xvi. 23); and these were but the precursors of a noble few, who are nobler because position or wealth or learning were consecrated to the service of the Gospel of a crucified Jesus. But these were not saved *because of* their social standing; as it was no prejudice to them, so it gave no advantage; and they joined a company of people, humble and often rude, who could impart no social consideration, and in company with whom they lost that which they already had.

5. And yet *these arrangements of God's plan have been crowned with success.—The foolishness of God is wiser than men; the weakness of God is stronger than men.*" Here is plain matter of historical fact. Such preachers, bearing such a message, winning mainly such converts, "have turned the world upside down." Such messengers have evidently no ground to glory in their success, as if it arose out of their own qualifications or abilities. To win such converts brought no glory in the eye of the world. The converts themselves could not suppose that anything in themselves drew out any special mercy of God towards them. To

join the "sect everywhere spoken against" brought no credit. Looked at on any side, the arrangements for the spread of the Gospel were such as to debar all pretence of "*flesh*" *glorying in the presence of God.*

[5. *All this not only historically, but generally, true.*—All Christian workers—and by no means preachers alone—need to remember that God proceeds on the same lines still. The "*wise*" and the "*scribe*" are not extinct. Their judgment is that of the natural heart always. They would say: "Convert the men of influence among the Roman masters of Corinth. Catch Gallio, and the whole city will go with him." [It was a bad day for the world when, not of Christ, but of Constantine, it could be said: "The world is gone after him!" (They who said this so bitterly of Christ, knew not of the glorious fulfilment of their words symbolised in the very next verse, when "the Greeks"—the first "ears" of the harvest of the Gentiles—came to "see Jesus," John xii. 19, 20).] "Convert a philosopher or two, or a rhetorician, amongst the Greeks; these will carry their disciples with them." The critic will dishearten the Christian Church as he points out that, in the mission-fields of the world, or, indeed, in the Churches at home, the bulk of the converts and membership belong to the middle or the working and lower classes. The divorce between Culture and Christianity is distressing, but it is not novel. It is nothing new or surprising if a Church reaps a more abundant harvest amongst the pariahs or the aborigines of India than amongst the Brahmins. God always has lighted His fire from the bottom, [and first ignites the slight material!] He began with the fisherman, and the fallen woman, and the publican, and the slave. Often does He begin with the servant maid or the child to-day, when He saves a family. "The poor have the Gospel preached to them," whilst it does reach and save culture and birth and wealth. These need "to become fools that they may be wise" (1 Cor. iii. 18). "*That no flesh should glory.*"

6. *No man may be a successful winner of souls who disregards this rule of God's procedure.*—If God have "given the tongue of the learned," that he may know how to speak "a word in season to him that is weary" (Isa. l. 4); if to natural gifts have been added opportunities of culture; if the ready tongue and warm heart are used to win many to the story of the Cross; if the Spirit of God make his gifts nobly auxiliary to the work of pulling down strongholds, and bringing hearts to the obedience of Christ; then he needs to remember that these are gifts, and that he is only an instrument. The axe may not complacently dwell upon its temper or edge, nor count up proudly the stout trees it has been used to fell. Every victory must be laid simply at the feet of the Lord of the battle. *In the day that God's labourers begin to "glory in His presence," in that day will they be laid aside.* "*Things that are not,*" they will revert to their original nothingness.

7. *The humble may hear hereof and be glad.*—The "*weak*" and the "*foolish*" are the very instruments God can best employ. He will have no joint saviours of "*them that are perishing.*" He wants men and women who will be content to offer themselves, and all the glory of any success, to Him.

8. *So also the message must not be tampered with. The Gospel is significantly summarised as "the preaching (the word) of the Cross"* (ver. 18).—To conciliate the pride of unsanctified intellect, the Sufferer on the cross must not be hidden behind the Babe in the manger, and still less behind the gentle, tender Healer of disease, and of the Teacher who—account for it, and for Him, as we can—spake as never man spake. [Calvary, and not even Bethlehem, is the true Kiblah of the Mecca of the pilgrimage of a *sinful* world, in search of rest to heart and conscience. Even on Christmas morning, the Christian preacher will also say, "Let us go even unto Calvary."] The message must be characteristically, whatever else it includes, the word of "Christ, and Him," too, "(as)

crucified." As a simple matter of often verified experiment, "*foolishness*" though this be, it has satisfied the needs of human hearts better than any "other Gospel" (Gal. i. 9). All great revivals of the life and vigour and progress of the kingdom of God in the world, have been in the closest association with this specific type of teaching; they have demanded it, and have produced it. It may be "*a stumbling-block*" (also in Gal. v. 11); but it may not be dispensed with. As matter of experiment it has been the foundation stone, of "*God's own power and wisdom*," on which effectual teaching and practical holiness of life have age after age been securely built. Try anything else, whether upon the world's "*wisdom*," or upon its sin and misery; the result will only be another verification of ver. 20; if the Church will confront the world's wisdom with the like worldly wisdom, God will make even His own people's effort to end in manifest "*foolishness.*" The "**argument** *of the Cross*" [so Evans, bringing into close connection with the same word in ver. 17] best secures that "*no flesh should glory before God*," and it therefore best succeeds.]

III. **Seen in the provisions of the Gospel for the salvation of the individual sinner** (vers. 30, 31).—(See also Separate Homily.) 1. For the overthrow and shaming of the imposing "entities" of the world, God has chosen to take and use "*non*-entities," "*things that are not*," have no existence [making His new creation out of "*nothings*"]. And, as truly, for their own salvation He has taken care that, if "*they* now *are*" at all, and are anything, or have anything—"*wisdom, righteousness, holiness, redemption*," every man shall "*glory only in the Lord.*" Only "*in Christ Jesus*" have they, or are they, anything. "*He is made*" all these things to them. Apart from Him they are foolish, guilty, unholy, lost—nothing! 2. In this fact, that the Gospel does nothing to conciliate either the intellect or the proud heart of man, does it stand very sharply distinguished from all other religions. In varying form, but with substantial unity, these exalt human nature, not abase it; if in any degree it needs elevation or recovery, the sufficient force is said to be within the man himself. In Stoicism man could be his own saviour; he must be self-reliant, and independent of all men and all things in his struggle after good; pride was indulged on principle. And in this it was but a special and philosophic formulating of the thought and feeling of human nature, even at its best, everywhere. That Gospel can hardly be of human origin, which even conceives of attaining success in a totally different direction. It tells a man that of himself he has nothing to recommend him to God; that he can do nothing to win His favour; that, whether "*by wisdom*" (ver. 21), or by works, he can attain to no knowledge of God; that all he gets is "*of God*," purely and simply, and for the sake of Christ; that even in the faith which lays hold of all, there is no merit—it is exercised in the strength of grace. As the Gospel has been seen above to be "*a stumbling-block*" to the natural understanding, so it is also an offence to the natural heart. All is of grace. Men, even the "*Jew*," the "*Greek*," the "*wise*," the "*scribe*," the "*mighty*," are "*perishing*" together. There is now only one fundamental classification: "*them that are perishing*," "*us who are being saved.*" No matter how high may rise the edifice of a Christian's life and holiness, at the foundation of all, lies the fact that the grace "*of God*" "*in Christ*" has in the first instance made him who "*was not*" into a saint. After long ages of heaven's perfected "*redemption*," it will still remain true that *Christ Jesus* is "*made redemption*" to him. He is in that world only as a man "*redeemed*" "*of God*" "*in Christ.*"

## *SEPARATE HOMILIES.*

Ver. 2. *A Church in Corinth: A Wonder.*—1. (*a*) John once gazed in astonishment upon a "Wonder in heaven" (Rev. xii. 1). The "Woman" was the Church of God, in its external aspect as an historical fact, a community, out of which, midway in its continuous (Jewish and Christian) existence, arose the Man-Child (*ib.*, ver. 5). (*b*) That Church—in the pre-incarnation preparation for its Christian stage; in the fitness and the "fulness of the time" (Gal. iv. 4) at which its Incarnate Head intervened in the earthly history of its growth; in the "manifold wisdom" (Eph. iii. 10) displayed in all the arrangements of God for creating a new Human Race, redeemed, saved, drawn without distinction from amongst Jews and Gentiles alike, and all finally gathered as a Church, a Family, into the House of its God and Father, every member of it a *replica*, even in their "bodies of glory" (Phil. iii. 2), of the Head and Elder Brother—is all through the ages a Wonder proposed for the instruction and adoring contemplation of "principalities and powers in the heavenly places" (Eph., *ubi supr.*). (*c*) That Church is the standing wonder of grace, of historical origin and preservation, of effect upon the world's life and thought, in all ages. The Redeemer, its Head, stands, not only before the throne of His Father, in the day of the thankful consummation of His triumph (as in Heb. ii. 13), but before the gaze of the successive generations of mankind, and at the bar of their judgment, and borrows the words of the ancient prophet (Isa. viii. 18): "Behold, I and the children whom God hath given me are for signs and for wonders . . . from the Lord of Hosts." In the occasional, temporary, embodiment of the principle of "miracle," the age of miracles has ceased. But, in a deeper sense, it has never ceased, for the **Church of Christ is a continuous Miracle.** It is a **Sign** (John's word, *ubi supr.*), *i.e.* it is a fact significant of much more behind, *a fact with an Argument in it.* Frederick the Great's chaplain gave a compendious argument for the truth of Revelation: "The Jews, your Majesty." The origin and history and work of the Christian Church are a similarly compendious argument for, *e.g.*, the verity of the Resurrection of Christ and His actual life to-day in Heaven. **The Church on Earth is a Wonder.** 2. A Church in Corinth is a Wonder. In **Corinth**, of all places! Remember (*a*) *Its Surroundings.* This was Roman, rather than Grecian, Corinth, which latter had been, even in the ancient world, a proverb of costly, highly organized, luxurious vice, but which, like the polluted Whitehall of Restoration days in England, had, a hundred years or so before, perished in the flames of national overthrow and of Divine wrath, Memmius, the Roman conqueror, like Titus afterwards at Jerusalem, being the unconscious avenger of God's outraged holiness. But Roman Corinth was corrupt enough; it had all the vice of a seaport town, the convergent point of the traffic and the traders of half the world. Heathenism, too, tends to corruption everywhere; where it does not directly make vice into worship and a source of revenue to idolatry, it has no power or motive for restraining the crude naturalism, the animalism, to which human nature gravitates always. In almost every epistle Paul had to speak plainly and strongly against every-day, open, customary, "fleshly" sin. The very phrase, "the flesh," is more historical than ethical in its first force and use by him. The city specially of Venus (Aphrodite) was a strange setting for the jewel of a Christian Church. Remember (*b*) *Its Difficulties.* For the members every-day life bristled with them. The most elementary Christianity meant a sharp disseverance from many most ordinary practices of heathen, and even Jewish, life. Municipal, family, social, mental, artistic, life—men touched Heathenism, Idolatry, in them

all. *E.g.* "Meat offered to idols" was a large part of the provisions at every public, civic banquet; creating many a difficulty for a Christian citizen. Men could hardly touch anything without handling the "defiling pitch"; every step was near a pitfall. "Conformity to the world" was obviously incongruous with any inward "transfiguration by the renewing of their mind." Yet, the wonder of it! a Church arose and grew and throve amidst such difficulties. Remember (*c*) *Its Work and Purpose.* Christ proposed by this little Church to regenerate Corinth, its morals, its faith, its life. It is a lump of the "salt," which is to arrest further corruption, and to impregnate the whole life of the city with something of its own gracious savour. It is the housewife's mass of leavened dough, which is to assimilate to its own condition and characteristics the whole larger mass around it. Like similar Churches which were beginning to dot the map of the empire here and there, this was the first appearance of *a centre of holy fermentation*, which, with the chemistry and life-processes of grace, was to break up and rearrange in healthy, renewed, order, the corrupting material around it. And yet, wonder of wonders! remember (*d*) *Its own Material.* (1) *Socially*, hardly anybody of any *status*; slaves, artisans, more women probably than men, Roman colonists, *Corinthian* Greeks, and *Corinthian* Jews. "Not many noble, not many wise," etc. (vers. 26, *sqq.*). A Rabbi like Paul, or the great Gamaliel, was an important personage amongst his fellow-Jews; but neither he nor his learning counted for anything with even the second-rate representatives of that aristocracy of mind which had been the glory of Greek philosophy. A ruler of the synagogue could be beaten by the Greek mob before the very tribunal of the proconsul (Acts xviii. 17), without the courteous *Roman* gentleman thinking him worth rescue or notice. Gaius, able to act "the host" to the Church, or (perhaps) Stephanas, whose household "addicted themselves" to the service of the saints, may have been a little wealthier than their brethren. But such occasional, and comparative, eminence within the Church was lost in a dead level of social insignificance when looked upon by the great people outside and above them. (2) Then, *personally*, factious, proud, boastful, suspicious; the Greeks among them intellectually vain, without real knowledge to support their pretentions to be philosophically minded, and worst of all, hard to wean from the heathen evil of their old lives and of the surrounding world. Of such a people God is about to make a Church, and with such Churches to save the dying, or dead and corrupting, ancient world! 3. The Coming Wonder is the success of God's method. Such Churches did save the world, and infuse into it a new life. It has never been God's method, nor must it be ours, to wait vainly wishing for material and systems and workers, such as are ideally necessary or desirable, before attempting anything for Him; still less to do nothing unless our *personnel*, and *doctrine*, and *methods* commend themselves to human reason or the natural human heart. "The best" may in that way be "the enemy of the good." "Imperfect" characters, "imperfect" work, "unreasonable" doctrine,—we will find the best we may,—with such much real work for God may be done, and has been done. *The* difficulty was, not the surroundings of the Church, nor the conditions of society, but the *evil within the Church.* "If the salt lose its savour, wherewith shall 'the world' be salted?" 4. A Church, a Christian, *could* live in Corinth, and *might* be a "saint" there; was "called to be a saint" there, and nowhere else. Obadiah *can* live in the court of Ahab, if need be. "Saints" *may* live saints in even Nero's household. In fact, in greater or less degree, every steady, consistent, persistent, Christian is "a sign unto his generation." He is sometimes a very Jonah kept alive in the dark "belly of hell." If there is

an Apology for Christianity in the continued existence and success of the Christian Church, there is as true an Apology for it in the life and faithfulness of the individual Christian, in Corinth, or elsewhere. *He also is "a fact with an argument in it."* Of the same flesh and blood, of like passions, with the same liabilities and dangers,—what is it makes him so different, calm under trial, patient under persecution, able to forgive his enemies, fearless in the presence of death, and, not least, "keeping himself unspotted from the world,"—what is this Religion, what is there in it, that it can work this continuous miracle of fifty, sixty, seventy years of a holy life? Christians are "men greatly wondered at" (Zech. iii. 8).

Ver. 17. *The Kenosis of the Cross.*—[Literally, "should be made *empty*"; same verb as in the important Phil. ii. 7, "He *emptied* Himself" (in connection with which see how Paul, for his own salvation's sake, "emptied himself," Phil. iii. 4-10). See also the thought of this second member of ver. 10 expanded and homiletically dealt with under chap. ii. 1-5.] Paul felt the danger of—

I. **Scholastic preaching.**—[Which met the demand of "*Greek*" type of mind for "*wisdom.*"] 1. Such as aims at the intellect rather than the heart; and gives no satisfaction to the man who wants practical direction and help how to live righteously; and deals with speculations and discussions "which minister" [provide and excite further "*questions*" and discussions in endless evolutionary succession] "*questionings*, rather than a dispensation" [*var. lect.*, for "edification"] "of God which is in faith" [1 Tim. i. 4]. 2. Such discussions of "the Cross" and Christianity have their time and place and value. As things are, Apologetics are a necessity, and the apologists need to be furnished with all wisdom of words and thought. As men's minds are, even "*the saved*" will speculate in reverent pondering upon themes which indeed touch them most closely where the Christian system tells of, and brings to them, immediate safety, peace, holiness for a guilty, unholy man, but which also in other directions broaden out and reach away into regions of almost illimitable vastness. At one end the Gospel answers promptly and distinctly the urgent question, "What must I do to be saved?" At the other it touches questions wide as the whole created universe. [*E.g.* What is the relation of the Incarnation and of the Cross to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, to the unnamed and unknown (possible, probable) inhabitants of other worlds than ours? (Eph. iii. 10). How widely has Sin diffused its effect? ("Peace *in heaven*," Luke xix. 38, may only have been a not very intelligent or significant cry of the populace. But Col. i. 20 speaks expressly of "reconciliation" of "things *in heaven.*)] 3. *The urgent matter is salvation.* To the preacher and to the sinner this must stand first. The wisdom of scholastic preaching "makes void the Cross" when it takes the first place, or is the only thing offered by the preacher, or desired and welcomed by the man. [Illustration.—A company of Israelites in danger, or actually bitten by serpents, though not yet feeling much of the effect of the deadly bite, are standing around the serpent uplifted by Moses in the wilderness (John iii. 14). They ask, "Tell us, Moses, what is the exact connection between that brazen thing up there and these serpents down here, and between it and the poison in our system, which is to be healed by looking at it. Tell us, analyse for us, the *modus operandi* of our looking and of the curative action of that up yonder." (They want "a theory of the Atonement," and an exposition of "the connection between faith and pardon or holiness.") "Tell us something about this poisonous substance which has been injected into our veins. What is its action? How did the serpents secrete it? Where did the serpents

come from? Why did the Creator make or tolerate such creatures?" (They want "a Doctrine of Sin," and to hear something about "the Origin and Permission of Evil.") If Moses had gratified this intellectual curiosity, and engaged in long, subtle discussion in the direction of their desire, there would have been the danger that his hearers should have dropped one by one and died, at the very foot of "the pole," died in sight of God's symbol, and pledge, and means, of Victory over death, and of Healing for the poison. Thus they and Moses together would have made "the Uplifting of the Serpent *of none effect.*" (Cf. the related thought, *not word*, in Gal. ii. 21, "then Christ is dead in vain," gratuitously.)] "Look to the Cross first, and be saved; then speculate to your heart's content, if only it do not divert your attention from the Cross." 4. For *the danger is not at an end when the soul has been to the Cross* and found salvation. The natural heart loves the discussion and the speculation. [See how the Samaritan woman at Sychar was no sooner closely pressed about the sins of her past life, than she turned off the conversation to a speculative topic, an interesting matter of discussion, which this "prophet" could perhaps resolve for her. "Ought men to worship on Gerizim, or ought we all to go to Jerusalem?" (John iv. 18-20); anything rather than sin, her own sin, its guilt, its peril!] And whilst the work of faith and of the Cross is only begun when the soul has first found it "the power of God unto salvation"; whilst "salvation" is a continuous thing, needing a continuously renewed efficacy of the Cross and its atonement; there is ever the danger lest the heart should fly off to speculations and inquiries which please the intellect, and do not offend the pride of the sinful heart, or disturb its peace. The professor of apologetics, the student of that Christianity which is the grandest of all philosophies, "*the widsom of God*," may do their work, and may lay it under noble contribution for the service of the Gospel. But the preacher has in hand a narrower, more immediate and urgent, affair. He dares not ordinarily deal with such "*wisdom of words*," lest he keep his dying sinner speculating, instead of believing, as he stands at the Cross, and so the Cross and its Offering for sin have been for that man "*emptied*" of all efficacy. Bishop Butler, with his *Analogy* and even his *Sermons*, are wanted. They strengthen the faith of those who do believe, and turn aside for them many an intellectual assault, giving them the helpful knowledge, moreover, that they are not believing in some scheme of teaching unworthy of the mind of man, not to say, of God. But Bishop Butler must not arrest the sinner on his way to the Cross, nor steal away his attention and interest in it, after he has found his way there. [It is hardly within any fair extension of Paul's thought, to take in the very real case where the Cross is "emptied" of its meaning as a reconciliation, or a propitiation, or a vicarious sacrifice.]

II. **Rhetorical preaching.**—[Such as meets the demand of the "Jews" type of mind for a "sign."] 1. Paul knew his Corinthians; he knew man's heart. There is something not unworthy about the Intellectual, Scholastic preaching, though it may ensnare souls and hold them back from making the most urgent use of the cross of Christ. It does at least bear witness to a Godlike capacity, which is the honour of man, and to which it endeavours to make response. But the preaching that is only words, words, words, beautiful words, words which please the love of beautiful sound, words which are the lovely clothing of perhaps a meagre or imperfect Gospel, or even that clothe very beautifully *nothing*; the craving for beauty of presentation first, and at all events, whether the thought be true, or poor, or perilous; both are distinctly on a lower level. He is snared by the very nobility of human nature whom "wisdom of thought" turns away, or keeps back, from the cross of Christ. But he is of smaller calibre to whom

little or nothing matters if only the preaching be "well put." Never mind what the song is all about, if only the preacher "have a pleasant voice, and can play well on his instrument, and the song be lovely" (Ezek. xxxiii. 32). They have no serious purpose to "do the words." Woe to the preacher of the Cross, who to please them, or to please himself, makes more of the manner than the matter; who never presses home the lessons of the hearers' sinfulness, but is content if he can engage their attention, and please their fancy. He may even so "preach the Cross"—not by any means leaving it out altogether—as that the one thing which makes impression upon his hearers is the beauty of his preaching. [So Louis XIV. shrewdly discriminated between his two great pulpit orators, one of whom made him think of the preacher, whilst the other made him think of himself.] Few preachers will deliberately lay themselves out thus to win applause for their sermons. But all should keep in view the danger to their unsaved hearers. And the danger *to themselves* also; for the preacher's own heart would naturally love the reward of human applause; it is more pleasant to have men's good word and goodwill, than to hear that they say: "He is too good, too earnest, too strict for me. He is always preaching about sin. 'I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil' (Ahab, of Micaiah, 1 Kings xxii. 8)." Every man will use his own gift; but an Apollos will need to take care that himself never stands before and obscures Christ, or arrests on the way to Christ the soul which urgently needs "the Cross" and its salvation. Intellect and oratorical gifts, both may indeed be gloriously used as consecrated means to a sacred end. But the human heart tends, in preacher and hearers, to make them the end, and to ask for no more, but to rest in these. ["The wisdom of which St. Paul speaks appears to have been of two kinds: speculative philosophy, and wisdom of words—eloquence. Men bow before talent, even if unassociated with goodness; but between the two we must make an everlasting distinction. *When once the idolatry of talent enters, then farewell to spirituality;* when men ask their teachers not for that which will make them more humble and Godlike, but for the excitement of an intellectual banquet, then farewell to Christian progress. . . . St. Paul might have complied with the requirements of his converts, and then he would have gained admiration and love—he would have been the leader of a party, but he would have been false to his Master—he would have been preferring self to Christ" (Robertson).] [This is no new danger: "In an age of decadence the form of the idea is esteemed far more highly than the idea itself. The surfeited soul, like the surfeited palate, craves the piquant, the highly dressed. . . . The noblest thoughts pass unheeded, unless surcharged with ornament. The Fathers of the Church have repeatedly pointed out this intellectual epicurism as one of the great obstacles to the progress of Christianity. The noble language of the pagan philosophers seemed to Justin Martyr a bait which would decoy many souls to death. Celsus . . . heaps his most biting sarcasms on the vulgarity of the form by which, according to him, truth is degraded in the Gospel, on the incorrectness and barbarisms of the style of the Sacred Writings, and on their want of logical force. He exaggerates, . . . yet he represents the repugnance of the 'Greek' to a book, which, like the lowly Redeemer whom it revealed to the world, made no pretence to the glory or excellency of human wisdom. Greece had drunk draughts too intoxicating to appreciate the purity of the living water. Those only who were thirsting for pardon and peace drew near to the Divine fountain. It had no charms for the epicureans of philosophy and art" (Pressensé, *Early Years. The Martyrs*, 7, 8).] Christ emptied Himself that He might save. Paul emptied Himself that he might be saved. Scholastic preaching may so empty the Cross of meaning,

or divert attention from its meaning; rhetorical preaching may so deaden all the force of its appeal; that the Cross cannot save.

Ver. 18. *The Preaching* [*the Word*] *of the Cross.—Observe the connection* between this and the preceding verse. Paul is jealous over himself as a preacher, and over his hearers, lest he should lay himself out to use, and they should desire to hear, "*the wisdom of* **words**"; he is jealous lest "**The Cross** *should be made void.*" For "**the Cross**" is the summary, and the very heart, of another "**word**" which God has spoken; the very strength of it, and the secret of its effectiveness, are there. It is God's "*argument*," set over against man's "*arguments.*" [So Evans.] Its whole force lies in the fact that it is not a theory, or a philosophy, but a fact; and that fact a "*Cross.*" Christianity, the Gospel, God's latest revelation of Himself, all gather themselves up around this startling sight, a Cross and a Crucified One. The effectiveness of this "Word" must be guarded at all costs; therefore the "*wisdom of* **words**" must be watched or banished altogether. Observe then—

I. **A wonderful fact about Christianity**: the prominent place given in it to "*the cross of Christ.*" 1. The Russian painter Verestchagin a few years ago in his exhibition of paintings hung side by side three pictures: A Russian Nihilist being executed by hanging, in a thick-falling snowstorm; Several wretched sepoys of the Mutiny of 1857, writhing helplessly, and in terror, as they stood bound to the muzzle of the guns whose discharge was to execute the sentence upon their revolt or treachery; The crucifixion of Christ. *Three executions!* The realism of this last was exceedingly great. No doubt it was very true to what was to be seen outside the walls of Jerusalem on a certain Friday morning of April, in the year 30, by one of the visitors come from foreign lands to keep the Passover. No doubt an execution, the execution of a strange man of Nazareth, of whom there had been a good deal of talk in the country for some three years past, was what was discussed at the gatherings for the Supper in upper rooms in Jerusalem that evening. If there were, as an early Christian apologist asserts, an official report from Pilate to Rome, it would be the matter-of-fact report of an execution. How comes "an execution" to be the central argument of God's message to mankind? Why is this crucifixion of the Author of the new religion so vital to it? One of the preachers of the new faith, Peter, was himself crucified, like the Master whom he served. But the cross of Peter has never affected the world's religion and civilisation and history like the cross of Christ. Why not? Of the hundreds and hundreds of Jews who were crucified by Roman hands outside and upon the walls of the city in the day of its capture and destruction, not one has left his name, or by his death made any such perceptible mark on the world's life and thought, as this other crucified Jew has done. Nobody would die for Peter because Peter was crucified. Thousands of spectators are year by year profoundly stirred by the pathos of the Oberammergau dramatisation of the scenes of Calvary; yet the emotion stirred by the intense realism of the death of Josef Meyer is of another order altogether to the stirring of hearts all over the world caused by even the mental contemplation of the dying of Jesus upon His cross. Why? If any heart is really "blessed" at Oberammergau, if by chance any life is changed by a real conversion in consequence of what is seen and felt there, manifestly it is not the crucifixion of the man Meyer which has effected the change, but the cross and death of Christ, which perhaps then was made for the first time to have any reality, and so any power of appeal, to the spectator's heart.

2. *The relation of the death of Christ to His Gospel is close, and uniquely close.* —The death of Peter might have been, like Paul's, by decapitation, for all that

it would have mattered to the substance of his teaching and to the issue of his life's work. It is an accident of history merely that Socrates died by the poison-cup, rather than by any other method of execution. Neither the fact nor the mode of the death of Buddha or Confucius is of any importance to their system of doctrine. Pascal lays his satirical finger upon the fact that, whereas the plan and the success of Mahomet meant the death of others, to the plan and success of Christ His own death was essential. [So Talleyrand's well-known reply to Le Reveillière Lepeaux, who had read before the Institute in 1797 an essay upon the re-establishment of Theophilanthropy. "I have but one observation to make. In order to found His religion, Jesus Christ was crucified and rose again. You ought to attempt as much" (Guizot, *Meditations*, pp. 1, 2).] It would be impossible to exhibit Christianity, except in a mutilated form whose identity had become doubtful, if no stress were laid upon the fact that Christ was crucified, or, above all, if that fact were left out altogether. As Christ identifies Himself with His Gospel, and with Truth, so here Paul brings into solitary prominence this one fact, "*the Cross*," as practically the sum and substance of Christianity. Without the story of the crucifixion of Christ, or with it, if that be only an accidental fact of the history; if that death were only an unfortunate, unintended, premature conclusion of the ministry of Christ—of Jesus; then His work and His works would perhaps long ago have faded into indistinct history or myth. At any rate, His teaching would at the utmost have been a beautiful code of ethics, the most beautiful the world possesses, but hanging, as it were, in mid-air, and weak, just as all the noblest systems of morals are all weak, in having no adequately efficacious working power. He would have been just one among the world's greatest and choicest names; the best loved of them all, perhaps, but not the present-day personal power He is, not only to a few cultured people who can realise the past and be influenced by it, but to the masses who must live, and must be raised, and must be saved, in the present.

3. The *guilty conscience and the burdened heart feel and know why Christianity meets them with a unique helpfulness* and sufficiency.—Whatever be the reason, the fact is certain that it is *the Cross* which makes Christianity the religion of *every* heart. John Bunyan was not merely casting Puritan or any temporary phase of theology into the form of a story; he was not merely generalising from his own experience; he was summarising universal experience; when he takes his Christian to the Cross, and there, and not till then, makes his burden fall off, and the man set forth with a new freedom and lightness of heart. The sight of the Cross made the burden fall. So say all *guilty* souls. They push on past the manger of Bethlehem; they have no ear for the name "Immanuel" until they have been to Calvary. When their heart has there been disburdened of its load, then first is that heart at leisure to come back to Bethlehem and learn the lesson of the holy manger. But the profundities and mysteries of condescension and love in the Incarnate Babe need a heart to understand them which has first seen the Crucified One "made sin for us." No New Testament writer, not even John, contributes more than does Paul to what light we have on the Incarnate Son; but the centre of gravity of Paul's scheme of the Gospel, "*my* Gospel," as he calls it often, will be shifted, if the Incarnation and the Birth become, more than the Death and its Atonement, the objects of attention, the subjects of preaching. It is a glorious Gospel, truly, which lies in the very name "Immanuel," God with, instead of against, us; it has in it all the possibilities of life (Rom. viii. 31). The race now is made up of "men of God's goodwill." But how? Why?

How is the individual, conscious of guilt in the past record, and more deeply conscious still of an inward, deep-seated heart aversion from God and from good, to enter into the Name "Immanuel"? Has the word reached him too late, since he *has* sinned, and *is* a sinner? The answer is at the Cross, or it is nowhere. It would not be fair to make the Incarnation merely one step in a chain of arrangements leading up to the Cross, and existing for its sake. Really each is in some points for the sake of the other. It is plain that if the Incarnate Babe exhibits and proclaims the reconciliation, the Cross makes it. "He hath reconciled us . . . by the *death* of His Son" (Rom. v. 10). We can date the death on Calvary within narrow limits. We cannot date the true Reconciliation; we read mysterious things of "a Lamb slain before the foundation of the world" (1 Pet. i. 20). But when God would make plain His heart to guilty, lost man, He chooses to emphasise the word of the Cross, not "*the word of the Manger.*" Reconciliation is the first step back to peace. Christian speculation on the meaning of the Incarnation, and its possible relations to the whole creaturely universe, has been fruitful in noble thinking. But Christian preaching which is to touch even "*the base things,*" in the most unworthy sense of "*base,*" has always, as matter of experiment, found in the Cross a better help for souls, and the best appeal for the use of the winner of souls. At the Cross he has found his *τοῦ στῶ*, from which to lift the world.

II. **"The Cross" is a summary of Gospel preaching.**—Of course the interpretation of this phrase of Paul will depend on our whole reading of the entire New Testament. It is one of those single words into which is condensed, and in which is assumed, all the customary belief and teaching of a man's lifetime. "How much do you mean by 'the Cross,' Paul?" "How much? Ask them which hear me constantly, ask them who read me most closely; behold, they know what I mean!" But at least it is manifest that Christ Himself made it central to His Gospel. The Gospel lies within an ellipse, of which these are the two *foci* (and the two are fundamentally one, the central Truth of a circle): 1. *A cross for the Master*; 2. *A cross for each of His disciples.* Midway, or thereabout, in the course of His three years' ministry, in the few days of retirement to the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi (Mark viii. 27-38), for the first time did Christ speak definitely to His disciples about death as the issue of His ministry, though not as yet precisely specifying that this should be by crucifixion. The news, so startling to a Jew, that this should be at the hands of the revered and representative men of his nation, and so saddening to a loving disciple, Peter was for hushing back, and, indeed, would have had His Master entertain no such gloomy thoughts: "Be propitious to Thyself, Lord (Matt. xvi. 22, literally); be kinder to Thyself than that!" Quick and sharp the cry broke forth from Jesus, "Behind Me, Satan!" Had the Adversary himself retained Peter on his side, the disciple could have said nothing more thoroughly according to his mind. Such a suggestion—to delete the cross from the programme of the Saviour's earthly sojourn and its work—was the very desire of the Devil. [It had been his proposition long before that the King should make a "short cut" to His kingdom, avoiding the cross, Matt. iv. 8-10]. The voice was Peter's voice; the thought was the thought of Satan. There must be a cross for the Master, or His work would go undone; there would be no Gospel of redemption. A few days after, as the little company, Jesus leading the way, the twelve "coming after Him," were slowly moving through some village of the neighbourhood, the villagers stood gazing at the little company of strangers, and Jesus stopped, and calling them to Him, said "*unto them all*" (Mark viii. 24; Luke ix. 23),

what Peter was not for hearing even for his Master, "Every man must take up his own cross"—as I do Mine; "daily"—as from the first I have done Mine. What Peter would not hear of for his Master, he and every disciple must hear of for himself, else there can be no discipleship. The whole Christian host, the Captain and the rank and file, all carry their cross. There is no Christian who does not. To himself and to his Lord the Gospel is "*the word of the Cross.*"

Ver. 21. *Seeking and finding God.*

**Introduction.**—Some striking and suggestive turns of phraseology here: 1. "*The world*" is seeking "*to know God.*" Of the "*believers*" who are brought to the goal which "*the world*" misses, it is not said that they "*know God,*" but, what at first seems a very much smaller thing, that they are "*saved.*" "Is that all?" "Yes; and a very glorious attainment too. It is, in fact, the reward and goal of the world's search." "*To know God*" and "*to be saved*" were long before closely linked (John xvii. 3). "In knowledge of whom standeth [consisteth] our eternal life." (*I.e.* as in the ancient collect, "Quem nosse vivere est.") 2. *The world seeks* for God *by the way of* "*wisdom.*" They who find this salvation which is the knowledge of God, find Him by the path of "*believing*"; another path altogether, which nevertheless justifies itself as the highest wisdom (ii. 6) to those who are brought by it to the goal. 3. Are we to press the distinction between "*in the wisdom of God*" [taking the customarily accepted turn of thought as that of Paul] and "*it pleased God*"? Perhaps not too strongly or too far. Yet it is true that it is no "*good pleasure*" of God to see His world groping after the knowledge of Himself in vain. [Acts xvii. 26-28 is very explicit: "He hath made . . . **that** *they should seek* . . . if haply they might find Him."] It may be His "*wisdom*" that they should not "*by wisdom* find Him out"; but He loves to be found and known and loved. We have, then,

I. **The world's inquiry.**

II. **God's answer.**

I. 1. **The heart and the intellect of man do inquire after the knowledge of God.**—Man's mind and heart will not be forbidden to inquire after God. Of no avail to throw doors open—invitingly open—and to solicit exploration, in directions to which admittance is given by gates inscribed "To Science," "To Music," "To Philanthropy," "To Truth and Right," and to shut up Religion-gate, or to build up the door leading out towards the road "To God." This fact in itself goes some way towards, and has some worth as, *an answer to the question,* "*Is God knowable?*" It were strange if the instinctive, or at least the ever-recurrent, inquiry of mind and heart, "O that I knew where I might find Him!" were a mere lying, deluding impulse, driving men to search endlessly after what could not be found, or after One who did not choose to be found; or if the idea of a God were only an *ignis fatuus* leading into mere bottomless bog and darkness. There can be no demonstration of Him, as there can be no demonstration that there is no God. But if the very constitution of man's mind be not a contradiction and a lie, then the unceasing quest after God witnesses to a possibility of a real knowledge of Him. Not a complete one—that is out of the question, by universal consent; but a real, if incomplete, knowledge, sufficient, moreover, for regulative [though not *merely* regulative] purposes. [The child "knows" the father, even though the man's life, and the particular character of its own parent, be in their whole round far beyond its present comprehension.

2. *Man is morally a strange contradiction in this matter.*—The natural heart is averse from God, "and desires not the knowledge of His ways" (Job xxi. 14); yet the famous sentence of Augustine is the summary of the universal human experience: "Tu excitas, ut laudare te delectet; quia

fecisti nos ad te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te." (*Conf.*, I. i. 1.) "The fool says in his heart 'No God,'" but, as Bacon quaintly puts it: "It is not said, 'The fool hath thought in his heart,' so as he rather saith it by rote to himself, as that he would have, than that he can thoroughly believe it, and be persuaded of it; for none deny that there is a God, but those for whom it maketh that there were no God" (*Essays*, "Atheism"). It is a lesson which the "fool" must say over and over to himself, to be quite sure: "No God, No God, No God." David never heard of an atheist by professed creed. [Another David, David Hume, avowed at the table of Baron d'Holbach, that he had never met with an atheist. "Allow me," said his host, "to introduce you to thirteen," indicating his guests.] Long ago Cicero pointed out that no nation of atheists had ever been found (*De Nat. Deor.*, i. 16). It is another thing, and capable of ready explanation, that now and again peoples have been found, few in number and low down in the scale of civilisation, in whom the very idea of worship seemed almost or quite extinct, and their life and thinking reduced to the narrowness of the animal existence. Yet the vague sense of a supernatural is hardly ever absent, and the idea of a God can always be called out again in even the most imbruted and degraded. Every man is capable of it, as no noblest animal is. As matter of history, belief has ever been before disbelief; belief has seemed natural, disbelief and denial have been induced, and matters of education. Man "cries out after God, after the living God" (Ps. lxxiv. 2). "This inquiry and search after God is the origin of all religion, and the truth even of heathenism" (Luthardt). And yet man is a prodigal who "goeth into a far country," where his Father may be out of sight and out of mind. It is the dislocation of God's order seen everywhere in His creation; man, like the rest, is "out of joint," as the result of a moral confusion in God's "very good" world and its order.

3. The *intellect* starts on its quest on some *four great lines of argument*, four great highways, as it hopes, to the assurance that there is a God and to some knowledge of Him. A few, capable of such thinking, have argued that, because man can have the conception of a Perfect Being, there must be somewhere a reality corresponding to the conception; that there must be an Infinite Substance, of whom [or which] Time and Space must be "accidents"; that the ideas of the Infinite, the Absolute, the Eternal, must have their root and basis somewhere; "the thought of God implies the existence of God." Often discredited, argued out of court, criticised or refined away, dismissed, buried, but with a wonderful resurrection power about it, the "No effect without a cause" argument has been a path along which a far larger class of minds—"practical people"—has set out to find God. Wider still in the field of its appeal, a broad way at which many—most—have gone in in their search, is the argument from Design, which is not really affected even if modern "evolutionary" science makes good all its claims, and turns every hypothesis into certainty; it would only be a revolutionising of our knowledge of the *method* by which the Creator had effectuated and carried out His design; however the result has been brought about, He is still there, directing the processes, guiding the whole, from inception to conclusion. [Said Newton: "Hæcce compages solis, planetarum, et cometarum et stellarum, non nisi consilio et dominio entis cujusdam potentis et intelligentis oriri potuit."] "Every science without exception shows that the order and [concurrent] adaptation and harmonies of nature are such as to make the chances no less than infinite against the supposition of Chaos, or the absence of the designing intelligence." Said Bonaparte in Egypt,

after listening to the atheistic talk of a group of officers and *savans*, gathered at his tent door under the lustrous stars of a sub-tropical night, "All very well, gentlemen; but who made all these?" [There is even in the Sublime and the Beautiful in Nature, secured as so much of it is by the very same properties of matter—mechanical, chemical, or other—and their combinations, as secure the more utilitarian results of Design, a concurrent "design argument," which leads many minds towards *the* Mind, towards God. (See this popularly accessible in *Pres. Day Tracts*, No. 20, R.T.S.] The common agreement of the vast majority of the race, account for it how men may, has always been to some a promising line of quest after God. "Where all the world have turned their steps, surely in that direction He is to be found." So men have said, nor without justification.

4. *The heart and the moral nature* have contributed to all the inquiry. The heart, as well as the intellect, has had its own "*wisdom*" by which it has sought "*to know God.*" And its wisdom has been the wisest. It has, indeed, affected the search after Him, in every line of quest. Very much according as their heart and moral condition have been, so have the inquirers valued or disparaged the paths by which the reason sought after Him; so have they hoped or feared that the path might lead them to His throne; so have they been urged onward by desire or dragged forward with reluctance, towards the place where perchance He might reveal Himself to the searchers. But the moral nature of man reaches out groping hands after Him. The sense of wrong and right has looked eagerly if it might see a Supreme Lawgiver somewhere behind "Right" and "Wrong." Conscience has intimated a moral world and its Ruler. The personal manhood has given supreme testimony to a Person with whom it may have fellowship, and the sense of dependence has reinforced the argument. "The same heart in man which trembles before an Authority above him yearns to be able to trust in Him." And the inquiry of the heart after God is the more earnest when the sense of guilt, so strange, so unreasonable, so inexplicable, and yet so completely justifying itself to the man who passes through its experiences, presses home the question: "How may I find God? If I find Him, what kind of God shall I meet? Will there be any pity, any mercy, any pardon, any love? Can there be? Can He show any?" Man can give no satisfying peace. The sinner has no authority to speak peace to himself. Nature is not without analogies which may suggest forgiveness; she has healing herbs for wounds and diseases, occasioned by violations of her own laws. But the guilty heart wants to know the Lawgiver, and His mind towards itself and its sin.

5. *Abundantly clear from the history of human thought*, philosophical or theological, that by any of these roads, or by all combined, *the race has never come to any satisfying certainty about God.* "His eternal power and Godhead" have not always been understood by the things that are made (Rom. i. 20). All these arguments have always been open to all, to study and use. They none of them depend upon Revelation. The wisest wisdom of this world has exercised itself upon them. Yet there is not one of them which is so demonstrative in its force as to compel assent or to give certainty. [There is not one which may not be frittered away by over-subtle criticism; not one from which the intellect cannot find a way of escape, if sore pressed by it in controversy.] There is not one which brings absolutely and infallibly to God. Phenomena and the Finite have not necessarily suggested an Infinite Subsistence. The unity of design is as consistent with the operation of one of two, or of one of many, workers left to do as he wills, as with the operation of One Only Worker. He must be very and sufficiently wise and powerful, but not of logical necessity all-wise, all-powerful.

"Is number finite or infinite?" asked a believing French *savant* of some atheistic men of science. "Finite." "Then the universe had a beginning." But the argument does not of necessity shut men up to a Creator. Men of "*wisdom*" have, in fact, held an Eternal Matter, or a self-originated Universe. Endless have been the ancient and modern, Oriental and Western, variations upon the Pantheistic theory of God and the world. A personal God, who is Creator, has not always been a God of providential rule over, and care for, His creation. Polytheism has been the belief of large sections of the race in all ages. The inquiry of mere wisdom has always, in point of fact, left men without just views or settled convictions. "The various apprehensions of wise men," said Cicero long ago, "justify the doubtings of sceptics, and it will be time enough to blame these when others agree, or any one has found the truth" (*De Nat. Deor.*, i. 10, 11. See Note at end of Homily). "(The wisdom of this world) does not deny Divine existence, though a good many persons are coldly doubtful and '*agnostic*' on the subject. But as in the first century any effective conception of God was wearing out of thoughtful minds [Emperors, not only like Augustus, but like Tiberius and Nero, were deified. On the other hand, all the vilest, meanest, Oriental or African gods and cults were being welcomed at Rome], . . . so now there are mere vague and high-sounding phrases about the Almighty current among the worldly-wise. He is a force —personal or impersonal, no one knows; where seated, why operative, how directed, none can tell. Or, He is a dream of Ineffable Beauty, and a fountain of Ineffable Pity; but how to reconcile this with the more severe aspects of nature and life baffles all the wisdom of the world. The sages are puzzled; the multitude know not what to think; and so 'the world by wisdom knows not God'" (Dr. Donald Fraser). "Anima naturaliter Christiana," cried the old apologist; but his word is both true and untrue. The *anima Christiana* truly finds reason enough to believe that in the design of its Maker it would "naturally" have known God. But there has been a blinding of the eye that looks for His traces; it cannot read aright the teachings of (say) nature. [It is "the pure in heart" now that alone "see God." The Sir Galahads, not the Lancelots, see the Holy Grail.] In some lines of argument the evidence also has got confused; it cannot be read with absolute confidence; [the pieces of the puzzle have got jostled, and some perhaps are lost; it is not easy to discover the design which would lead to a Designer]. The altar "to an unknown God" in Athens is confessedly a symbolical fact in a representative city; man's wisdom with all possible advantages avowing a result so incomplete as to be a defeat of any search "by wisdom" only. The wisest minds need God's pilotage if they are to reach Himself. Science does not find man in man's body, nor God in God's world. The most modern thing is to take the confession of failure and wear it as the badge of superiority: "Agnostic, we!"

6. *And this was "in the wisdom of God."*—The whole moral history of earth and mankind may probably be a great object-lesson in sin, its meaning, its mischief, its misery, and in grace, its manifold wisdom, and infinite fulness, for the teaching of other worlds and other races. The failure of mere fallen, darkened reason, even in its wisest, mightiest, most industrious examples, to "come at" God, "though He be not far from any one of us," may not be the least instructive detail in this great Didactic of the story of our race. However that may be, with regard to "principalities and powers in heavenly places," and however the question may be decided whether, if sin had not darkened man's reason and perverted his heart, and confused and blurred some of the clearest evidence for a God, man might then "*by wisdom*" have known God, [if, indeed, he would then have had any need to search; man is seeking now a *lost* vision and knowledge];

as things are, this world-wide, age-long result all falls in with the great principle of vers. 29, 31, that all pride of human intellect should be utterly excluded, made impossible by its utter failure to "find out God" (Job xi. 7). **The knowledge**, when it comes, **is to be through a "Salvation,"** and salvation is for **"those who believe."**

II. **God's answer.**—1. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in" the midst of Israel, so God has "lifted up" His Son upon a cross in the midst of mankind, groping with blind eyes, and outstretched hands, and yearning heart after Himself. The central Figure of history is Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of God. The central Fact of the history of the Christ is the Cross. [The wise men from the East asked, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" Thirty years after Pilate gave the answer, putting upon the cross, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."] The world for ages had been asking, "How, where, may we find and know God? Is there a God to know and find?" The answer given by the "preaching" of Paul and his fellows and their successors is, "Look at Jesus Christ, and above all at Him crucified, and see and know God." 2. All we need to know, perhaps all we can be made to know, about God, we *hear from* Jesus of Nazareth; indeed, more truly still, we *see it in* Jesus of Nazareth. "He that hath seen Him hath seen the Father." [As we say of a boy whose father is unknown to an inquirer who, nevertheless, is acquainted with the lad, "Well, he is his father over again."] What He said and did, and, above all, the reasons, the principles of judgment and action, which underlie all He said and did,—we may transfer them all to God, and say, "Thus and thus does He act and judge." His relation, *e.g.* to prayer and to sin, is exhibited in Christ. His requirement of faith in Himself in order to sight and health and blessing, is a revelation of God in this respect. We have a record, attested by historical evidence, sufficient when the nature of the case is taken into full account, of a Person and His character and teaching, starting with which we gain, at the least, a *crucial* and *probative* instance that there is a "supernatural" Order, which in that one case at least has broken in upon, and manifested itself in the midst of, the natural. The world of God and of things spiritual disclosed itself in Him, His life and work. It is an ascertained fact, and level to the apprehension of the simplest. And when, moreover, it is understood that the whole Written Word is the word of Christ the Revealer, then all its teachings about God become those of Christ. And, as matter of fact, the only certain and satisfying knowledge of God has been that which is given in the Word of God; the Written and the Incarnate are for this purpose one. 3. But *Paul singles out again and again the Cross* as the central point of the revelation. A knowledge of God is, in his view, given there which does not even come through the three years' ministry. [When Moses pleaded, "Show me Thy glory," and God made His *goodness* to pass before His servant, it was not even a partial refusal of his request. His "goodness," "pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin," *is* His "glory" to sinners' hearts (Exod. xxxiii. 18—xxxiv. 7).] It is interesting in the last degree to hear the confession of even secular students of history that the cross of Christ is the end of the ancient world and the beginning of the modern; that all ancient history, Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, Roman, all led up to it and converged upon it, whilst all the life of the modern world radiates from it; interesting to see how typical was the simple fact that in the very inscription on the cross were gathered up all the best history of preceding ages, —Hebrew, Greek, Latin—Religion, Wisdom, Law—Worship, Speculation, Government; profoundly interesting to see how Christianity meets the "*Jew*"-type, "*requiring a sign*" of the nearness of the Supernatural ["for outward,

visible wonders"], and of the "*Greek*"-type, asking for the True and Beautiful and Good ["for inward completeness of system"]; meeting the one in the failure of his moral quest, and the other in the failure of his intellectual inquiry. But the "*base*" and "*despised*" and guilty want first and most urgently an answer for the conscience. And, once more it may be said, that the Cross has, age after age, given a satisfaction on this point found nowhere else. "Theories of the Atonement" have not always been consistent or wise, or duly considerate of all the facts; the analysis of the way in which the holy Justice of God was displayed at Calvary, as well as the Mercy, may sometimes have been mechanical and overdone. Much of all this has, moreover, been beyond the mass of seeking souls. And, apart from it all, by "*believing*" they have at the Cross come into a "*salvation*" which has meant "*knowledge of God.*" Their faith in Christ has been crowned by a gift of the Spirit, whose indwelling has restored more and more perfectly spiritual vision and judgment and power. They have been put by Him *en rapport* with spiritual things. There has come a "demonstration of the Spirit," which has given evidence and proof and certainty. God reveals Himself to their "spirit." They understand the reason of the failure of the search "*by way of wisdom.*" "*Wise*" or "*foolish*" after the mere intellectual standard of "*the world,*" the "*saved*" "*know,*" and they are saved at the Cross by "*believing.*"

NOTE.—Plato complains how hard it is to discover the Father of the universe. Socrates held it to be the greatest possible happiness to know the will of the gods, but did not believe this discoverable by principles of reason, and recommended divination [Christlieb, *Mod. Doubt and Chr. Belief*, pp. 78, 79. He, with others, says further:] Men never found God as personal, as holy, as Creator. Plato's God oscillates between Nature and a Divine Idea. Aristotle made Him personal, but limited by primordial matter, and only a *Demiourgos.* The utmost attained to by the race was an intermittently shining, half-obscure presentiment, but not that God is and can only be One.

Ver. 30. *Christ our Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, Redemption.*

I. **Wisdom.**—In two senses. Not even in Paul's, or in God's, could we be "*wise*" if there were no Christ to know, and unless He helped us to know Himself. He is the great Fact to know which is Wisdom. He gives the faculty for knowing, and the Spirit who exhibits Him to our awakened perception. He is Himself the Revealer, the Sum of all Revelation, and the giver of the "Spirit of wisdom and revelation" (Eph. i. 12). Like the "world" at Corinth, the "world" to-day makes no account of such "wisdom." But "knowledge" and "ignorance," "wisdom" and "folly," are all relative terms. Measured by one standard, placed in one set of circumstances, judged by one purpose, a man may be wise. With no change in himself, but with another set of conditions, in other circumstances, for another purpose, he may be a fool. To be really wise he must have the knowledge just then required and must know how to apply it. On a certain voyage, for example, so long as all went well, the ship's surgeon was the wise man of the company. Besides his medical skill, he knew everything which could make the tedium of life on shipboard pass agreeably away. He easily carried the palm for popularity, and for being the universally clever man. The ship was wrecked on a desolate island. It became a question of finding shelter, of finding and cooking food, and here the many-sided man was utterly at fault. The common sailors, with their experimental knowledge of a thousand-and-one odds and ends of practical convenience, despised the doctor as a helpless hindrance. There was a curious reversal of the position. He had been a hero, a little god, on

board; now he was a fool who wanted feeding and could find no food. The only wisdom known to the Book of God is Divine knowledge, and that is all bound up in Christ. No Christian will wisely undervalue mere natural wisdom or culture. The wide knowledge of the facts of the universe and their laws—**Science**; the wide mastery of the facts of the past and the great principles underlying them—**History**; the full-stored knowledge of the human mind, and of its laws—**Philosophy**; literary lore; the accumulations of the linguist; all these are noble and ennobling possessions, elevating, widening, as well as furnishing the mind which is enriched by them. All *due* honour even to the "wise man after the flesh." All highest honour to such Wisdom when she becomes the handmaid of Divine truth. But all this is only *fair-weather knowledge*. The storm is coming, the wreck of the present order of things; the day of peril and of judgment, when the great question will be Eternal Life or Eternal Death. Even now all mere human knowledge is of things that "vanish away." Knowledge and the objects of knowledge both are in ceaseless flux; a shifting, ever-changing knowledge of a shifting, ever-changing world, a partial knowledge perpetually under revision, correction, or enlargement. The one unchanging Fact is God in Christ. When, in "the new heavens and the new earth," our science, history, literature, language, art, shall have been made obsolete, or shall have become mere curious memories, the knowledge of God will abide, true as ever, important as ever. "Can you tell me about God?" is a question which somehow the human mind cannot let alone. "Tell me about man, about myself. What is the meaning of the strange conflict always going on within me, between a higher and a lower self? What is the voice I sometimes seem to hear within me? and why is it so often a voice of self-reproach?" And then, when sin is understood, come the great questions: "Tell me whether there is any way of peace with myself and with God? Is He good? But that only makes me the more sadly wrong. Do not tell me what you hope, or think. Has He spoken? What are His terms of restoration?" Up to Paul's day the wisest man of this world never answered such questions with any finality of satisfaction. The world's wisdom has no final answer to-day. The very simplest Christian has an answer—an answer which, in ten thousand instances, has "worked" well in practical life. He believes he has reached certainty, where the wisest thinkers who disdain the help of Revelation go, groping and guessing, over the same wearisome ground of human ignorance; he certainly has learned to solve moral questions in practical living, as they are never solved elsewhere. He has learned a wisdom on these topics which will have abiding value in the dissolution and vanishing of all other knowledge besides, and will avail even at the bar of God. The Christian man's theory of life and morals, his doctrine of God and of creaturely existence, are in fact a complete *philosophy*, which centres for him in Christ. All we can know, certainly all that we need to know, of God, for regulative ends, is exhibited in Christ. We hear from His lips a revelation of God; but we do not only listen, we look and see what God is, in His own holiness. Every great principle of His dealing with petitioners and with sin may be traced out in, and often lies upon the very surface of, the works of Christ. Said Augustine: "The works of Christ are themselves words of The Word." The Bible is through the Spirit the revelation of Jesus Christ; and thus again He is "*made to us wisdom*" on the great topics of the inward moral schism, its meaning and origin and remedy. At His cross is the only definite word anywhere found about the pardon of guilt. And all the "wisdom" is one *into which they have lived their way*. It is verified knowledge; it is the knowledge of Life. God and Conscience

and Sin—they understand these by the teaching of the Spirit of Christ. The way of peace with God, they know it, they have availed themselves of it—it is Christ's work. Peace within themselves instead of the old moral discord—they have learned the secret of that also. And everything which is really wisdom, before God, and in the presence of eternity, they are being taught by the Spirit of Christ. **The Revealer is Christ, the great Prophet of God.**

II. This passes over into **Righteousness and Sanctification.**—We should once more have expected "*power*" to be linked with "*wisdom.*" But no, something better—"*righteousness.*"

1. *These to be taken together.*—They go together, in fact, as closely as in the grammar of the text. To a heart which learns Paul's dialect they become almost a familiar two-worded unit of his customary thinking, as they are used in the vocabulary of Paul. Righteousness and Sanctification cover the whole career of the Christian life from pardon to glory. They are one work; one salvation; one glorious life. [Rom. viii. 30, "them He glorified," began to be true from the moment of "them He justified."] Not the same thing: the one the first step; the other the whole subsequent course. [In the illustrative language of Ps. xl. 2, the Righteousness is located at the point where the foot is first set firmly upon the rocky brink of the "horrible pit"; Sanctification is the progressive departure farther and farther from the pit, with "goings" which are more and more "established."] The one the work of pardoning, the other of the purifying, grace of God; in modern phraseology, blessings respectively objective and subjective; in old theological language, relative and real; imputed, imparted. The one restores His favour, the other His image. Apart from all technical phraseology, the fashion of which may change from teacher to teacher, from Church to Church, from century to century, the distinction is a real one and an inevitable one. The righteousness is the result of an *act* of pardon; the sanctification is the result of a *process.* It is one thing, and a simple one, to "justify" a man from his past debts; it is another and a longer, greater matter to cure him of thriftless or extravagant habits; yet both combine, and are needed, for complete help for the debtor. Something must be done *for* men, very much *in* men, if the work of redemption is to be accomplished. [The "Jews" were not only delivered from their captivity in Babylon; they were cured by it of the love of idolatry which had brought the captivity upon them. In the unvarying symbolism of Scripture the "blood" deals with guilt, the "water" with impurity. The "water and the blood" are the credentials of a *complete* Saviour (1 John v. 8).] A man who is "safe" in regard to the guilt of the past is "saved," but in a very elementary sense only. That does but clear the way for a "salvation" which is larger, and complete: "Sanctification." The man who is forgiven must go on to be holy.

2. *Christ is our sanctification.*—Not at all as though there were in the Gospel any vicarious holiness belonging to His work, such as will excuse the man who believes in Christ from seeking and working out a very real personal holiness. There was truth in the out-of-fashion and discredited phrase "Imputed Righteousness" (meaning "imputed holiness"). But it was only true to those who are aiming at realising their holiest in practice and attainment. Imperfection will cling where it brings no guilt. In Christ they are judged "holy" by a law which for His sake is interpreted in evangelical grace, and is reckoned as fulfilled by love. But God desires to have His "righteous" ones really "sanctified." And the grace which sanctifies is secured for them, as pardon was, by the work of Christ. With Him was freely given the Spirit who makes them holy—Christ is the model and the means of their sanctification. It is the **work of the Great Priest of the Gospel order.**

**III. Redemption is the crown of the work of Christ.**—The word is here used in its highest and noblest sense. In a lower, narrower use it is the *foundation* of salvation; men could not be "saved," if they had not been first "redeemed." The redemption of the *race* is the basis and background of the salvation of the *individual*. But, looking forward, we see salvation fulfilled, culminating in redemption. Man is not only soul and spirit, "but body, soul, and spirit." The body was redeemed by Christ [*not* Eph. v. 23, but 1 Cor. vi. 20]; and as it has shared in the ruin and curse wrought by sin, so it will share in the deliverance wrought by Christ. [It is part of the "creature," Rom. viii. 21, 22.] It must wait longest for, and must receive latest of all, its part in the redemption of our complete manhood by Christ; but He wore it Himself, and still wears it, in a glory which is an earnest and pledge to the very body that He will not reckon His redemption complete until His people stand by His side before His Father ["Behold, I and children which God hath given Me" Isa. viii. 18; Heb. ii. 13], the last trace of the fell work of sin gone from every part, even the humblest, of their nature. The body will rise because He has risen, body and all. It will appear in glory, as, and because, He appears in glory. The vista of New Testament revelation leads up to a House in whose courts there move about, as if "to the manner born" [they have been "*new*-born" to it], a glorious Family, every one of whom is "conformed to the image of God's Son," "the firstborn amongst many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29). He is the pattern whose reproduction in them accounts for the strong "family-likeness" in them all. This is their "good" (Rom. viii. 28), up to which "all things have been working together"—Grace, Providence, even History in its worldwide, age-long course. The "redemption of the body" (Rom. viii. 23) will be the latest element in a redemptive process which at last puts every man who is in the new Race, whose Head is the Second Adam, beyond the reach of sin or death. As an Idea in the mind and heart of God—to speak humanly—the beginning of this whole Redemption is dateless, "before the world was." Historically, its unfolding anticipated Calvary. But in a true sense the initial moment was when He cried in death, "It is finished!" And its completion will date from the moment when the Divine-human Redeemer looks for the first time upon the gathered, completed company of His own, and sees His own victory over Sin and its work, Death, realised in His people. **The King and Deliverer** will then cry once more, "Finished!" His people will say, "Thou art made unto us Redemption!"

## *HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.*

Ver. 9. *God is Faithful.*

**I. God's character.**—To use a homely word, "reliable." Like His "faithful sayings," in the Pastoral Epistles; as He is, so is "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." "By every (such) word doth man live" (Deut. viii. 3). Here His character is the great basal fact on which rests the fulfilment of "*shall confirm*" (ver. 8). The "*confirmation*" of "*the testimony*" (ver. 6) was but the means employed by this "*faithful God*." It is an admirably suitable and efficient instrumentality, but chiefly because it is in His hand. [Cf. the same link of thought in a Fijian's boast to a missionary (known to H. J. F.), "This is a good gun, *but I carry it.*"] Promises, the arrangement of the "plan of salvation," everything in Gospel and in grace, for all worth to us, ultimately come to this, that behind them, directing them, employ-

ing them, is the "*faithful God.*" All faith ultimately finds its way to Him. "Have faith *in God.*" He is reliable, and may be counted on, to an utter certainty.

II. **An argument for our heart, resting upon it.** 1. *His character is pledged to us.* "He cannot deny Himself." He cannot turn His back upon the Self whom His people have always known. He cannot do anything which is incongruous with His past character and dealings. He will never "begin again," on some new and unexampled line of conduct. We may plead "For Thy Name's sake," and feel that we there have a strong hold upon Him. His "Name" is involved.

2. *When He called us,* He promised, so far as depended on Him, to finish His work by bringing us "*unreproveable*" to "*the day of Jesus Christ.*" The beginning was, *quâ* His intention and desire, a promise to finish. It committed Him to finish His work, if we will not thwart His purpose. He desires to redeem the pledge of His "*calling.*"

Vers. 20, 21. *Human Wisdom.*

I. **Challenged,**
II. **Confounded,**
III. **Superseded, by the Gospel.**—[*J. L.*]

Ver. 20. "*Where,*" *indeed!*

I. **What have they not attempted?**
II. **What have they not promised?**
III. **What have they achieved?**
IV. **How are they brought to nought?**—[*J. L.*]

Ver. 30. *Christ is made* [cf. John i. 14 (another tense of same verb), the great primal wonder, of which this is one purpose and outcome. See Appended Note] *Wisdom to us.*

The **true culture** is the conforming of our manhood to the ideal in Christ. "Is it not a fact that a certain superficial refinement of manners, some acquaintance with the forms of good society, a little stock of ordinary phrases, and the fact of having seen or heard something of the best known products of literature, together with a fashionable style of dress, is, in the opinion of most, a sufficient claim to the possession of culture. . . . Only look at the simple-minded man, not possessing much outward culture, but animated by the Spirit of Christ, and by sound piety; what a sense of moral fitness, what correct tact, what sound judgment, especially as to the ethical value of any person or action, do we find gradually produced in him. In such a case the educating influence of Christianity is frequently shown in a most surprising way." (Christlieb, *Mod. Doubt and Christian Belief,* pp. 40, 43.)

Ver. 30. *Christ is made unto us Redemption.*

I. **By an atoning sacrifice** (Gal iii. 13).

II. **By infusing the spirit of a new life.**

III. **By abolishing death as the penalty of sin.** There was evidently death, violent death, in the pre-Adamic geological ages. But the "violent" death may have been painless, for aught we know. If not, it may have been that there would have been no death for the crown of creation, man. Or if there had been death for him, it would have been only dissolution, natural, happy. Sin, indeed, turned dying into Death. It is Death because it is not only the penalty of sin, but it is the physical anticipation and adumbration of the true Death—"death that is death indeed"—the abandonment of the soul by God Who is its Life. Sin links fear with the thought of death, for to an innocent moral nature, one might as reasonably hope as fear, before the presence of the unknown future. Now in Christ death is once more only dying; decease, departure, falling asleep. The one thing which now the dying of a Christian is never called is "death." He hath abolished death; it practically counts for nothing to His people. He



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has abolished its bondage of fear (Heb. ii. 15).

Ver. 30. *Christ made to us . . . Righteousness, Sanctification, Redemption.*

Stanley brings out **three pairs of correlatives.**

I. **Subjective.** 1. Righteousness. 2. Holiness. 3. Freedom.

II. **Objective.** 1. Acquittal. 2. Consecration. 3. Deliverance.

## *APPENDED NOTES.*

Ver. 21. *Seeking God.*—To be blessed by God, to know Him, and what He is, that is the battle of Jacob's soul from sunset till the dawn of day. And this is our struggle—*the* struggle. Let any true man go down into the deeps of his own being, and answer us, what is the cry that comes from the most real part of his nature? Is it the cry for daily bread? Jacob asked for that in his *first* communion with God—preservation, safety. Is it even this, to be forgiven our sins? Jacob had a sin to be forgiven, and in that most solemn moment of his existence he did not say a syllable about it. Or is it this, "Hallowed be Thy name"? No! Out of our frail and yet sublime humanity, the demand that rises in the earthlier hours of our religion may be this, "Save my soul"; but in the most unearthly moments it is this, "Tell me Thy Name." We move through a world of mystery; and the deepest question is, "What is the being that is ever near, sometimes felt, never seen? That which has haunted us from childhood, with a dream of something surpassingly fair, which has never yet been realised? That which sweeps through the soul at times as a desolation, like the blast from the wings of the Angel of Death, leaving us stricken and silent in our loneliness? That which has touched us in our tenderest point, and the flesh has quivered with agony, and our mortal affections have shrivelled up with pain? That which comes to us in aspirations of nobleness, and conceptions of superhuman excellence. Shall we say It or He? What is It? Who is He? Those anticipations of Immortality and God, what are they? Are they the mere throbbings of my own heart, heard and mistaken for a living something beside me? Are they the sound of my own wishes, echoing through the vast void of Nothingness? Or shall I still call them God, Father, Spirit, Love? A living Being within me or outside me? Tell me Thy Name, thou awful mystery of Loveliness! This is the struggle of all earnest life."—*F. W. Robertson*, "*Sermons*," i. 45, 46, "*Jacob's Wrestling*." Cf. "*In Memoriam*," cxxiv., "The heart's refusal of Atheism."

Ver. 21. *The Foolishness of the Preaching.*—If Christianity had been an "idyll" or a "pastoral," the product of the simple peasant life and of the bright sky of Galilee, there is no reason why it should not have attracted a momentary interest in literary circles, although it certainly would have escaped from any more serious trial at the hands of statesmen than an unaffected indifference to its popularity. But what was the Gospel, as it met the eye and fell upon the ear of Roman Paganism? 1 Cor. i. 23, ii. 2. Here was a truth inextricably linked with other truths equally "foolish" in the apprehension of Pagan intellect, equally condemnatory of the moral degradation of Pagan life. In the preaching of the Apostles, Jesus Crucified confronted the intellectual cynicism, the social selfishness, and the sensualist degradation of the Pagan world. To its intellect He said, "I am the Truth"; He bade its proud self-confidence bow before His intellectual Royalty. To its selfish, heartless society, careful only for bread and amusement, careless of the agonies which gave interest to the amphitheatre, He said, "A new commandment," etc. (John xiii. 34). Disinterested love of slaves, of barbarians, of political enemies, of social rivals, love of man as man, was to be a test of true discipleship. And to the sensuality, so gross, and yet often so polished, which was the very law of individual Pagan life, He said, "If any man will come after Me," etc. (Matt. xvi. 24); "If thine eye offend thee," etc. (Matt. xviii. 9). Sensuality was to be dethroned, not by the negative action of a prudential abstinence from indulgence, but by the strong positive force of self-mortification. Was such a doctrine likely, of its own weight and without any assistance from on high, to win its way to acceptance? Is it not certain that debased souls are so far from aspiring naturally toward that which is holy, elevated, and pure, that they feel toward it only hatred and repulsion? Certainly, Rome was unsatisfied with her old national idolatries; but if she turned her eyes toward the East, it was not to welcome the religion of Jesus, but the impure rites of Isis and Serapis, of Mithra and Astarte. The Gospel came to her unbidden, in obedience to no assignable attraction in Roman society, but simply in virtue of its own expansive, world-entrancing force. Certainly, Christianity answered to the moral wants of the world, as it really answers at this moment to the true moral wants of all human beings, however unbelieving or immoral they may be.

The question is, whether the world so clearly recognised its real wants as forthwith to embrace Christianity? The Physician was there; but did the patient know the nature of his own malady sufficiently well not to view the presence of the Physician as an intrusion? Was it likely that the old Roman society, with its intellectual pride, its social heartlessness, and its unbounded personal self-indulgence, should be enthusiastically in love with a religion which made intellectual submission, social unselfishness, and personal mortification, its very fundamental laws? The history of the three first centuries is the answer to that question. The kingdom of God was no sooner set up . . . than it found itself surrounded by all that combines to make the progress of a doctrine or of a system impossible. The thinkers were opposed to it; they denounced it as a dream of folly. [He quotes Tacit., *Ann.*, xv. 44, "Exitiabilis superstitio"; Suetonius, *Nero*, xvi., "Superstitio nova et malefica"; Celsus' comparison of the worship of Christ with the Egyptian worship of cats, crocodiles, etc.] The habits and passions of the people were opposed to it; it threatened somewhat rudely to interfere with them. There were venerable institutions, coming down from a distant antiquity, and gathering round them the stable and thoughtful elements of society; these were opposed to it, as to an audacious innovation, as well as from an instinctive perception that it might modify or destroy themselves. National feeling was opposed to it; it flattered no national self-love; it was to be the home of human kind; it was to embrace the world; and as yet the nation was the highest conception of associated life to which humanity had reached. Nay, religious feeling itself was opposed to it; for religious feeling had been enslaved by ancient falsehoods. There were worships, priesthoods, beliefs, in long-established possession; and they were not likely to yield without a struggle . . . It was a time when the whole administrative power of the empire was steadily concentrated upon the extinction of the Name of Christ. What were then, to a human eye, the prospects of the Kingdom of God? It had no allies, like the sword of the Mohammedan, or like the congenial mysticism which welcomed the Buddhist, or like the politicians who strove to uphold the falling Paganism of Rome. It found no countenance even in the Stoic moralists; they were indeed amongst its fiercest enemies. [In foot-note he adds, "Who can marvel at its instinctive hatred of a religion, which proclaimed a higher code of Ethics than its own, and which, moreover, possessed the secret of teaching that code practically to all classes of mankind? (See next Appended Note, *a*.)] If . . . it ever was identified by Pagan opinion with the *cœtus illiciti*, the *collegia illicita*, with the moral clubs of the imperial epoch, this would only have rendered it more than ever an object of suspicion to the government. Between the new doctrine and the old Paganism there was a deadly feud."—*Liddon*, "*Bampton Lectures*," III. iii. 3 (*β*).

*a*. Appended Note to above: "Most men, being incapable of understanding logical arguments concerning truth, need instruction through parables; thus those who are called Christians derive their faith from the parables of their Master. They sometimes act, however, like those who follow true philosophy. There are some among them who, in their zeal to control themselves, and to live honourably, have succeeded in becoming in nothing inferior to true philosophers."—*Galen* (*the physician*); *from a lost work on Plato. Quoted in Luthardt.*

Ver. 23. *The Cross and its Victory.*—To the ancient world the cross was the symbol of shame; to us it is our joy, our comfort, and our boast. There is nothing which can possibly be more opposed to all our natural ideas than the cross. We can understand a God of majesty; we can comprehend a manifestation of God in the great interests of humanity; but nothing could be more directly opposed to our every notion than that the death on the cross should be His supreme manifestation. "To the Jews a stumbling-block, to the Greeks foolishness" (1 Cor. i. 23). And so it is still. And yet it was just the preaching of the Cross that conquered the world. In proportion as concessions are made to the repugnance of the natural reason to the cross is Christianity weakened and its efficacy lessened. It is only the Christianity of the cross which is the victory over the world. And it has conquered. A few years since a drawing representing the Crucified was found upon the walls of the ancient palace of the Cæsars in Rome. The rude sketch speaks to us from the midst of the times of the struggle between Christianity and heathenism, and is a memorial of the manner in which the minds of men were then stirred. Some heathen servant of the emperor is taunting his Christian fellow-servant with this contemptuous sign. The relic belongs to about the year 200, and is by far the most ancient crucifix we know of. But this . . . is an ironical one. It is a caricature of Christ, before which a Christian stands worshipping, and it bears the inscription, "Alexamenos"—the name of the derided Christian—"worshipping his God." We see that the Crucified Saviour and the preaching of the cross were the scorn of the world; and yet this conquered the world. In the great struggle between heathenism and Christianity the cross was the sign of victory. Whether the story is true or not that Con-

stantine, before his decisive battle with Maxentius, saw in the clouds of heaven the appearance of a cross, with the inscription, "By this shalt thou conquer," even if it is a fiction, it is yet truth in the form of fiction, for the cross was the victorious power, and such it will remain. If Christianity is to conquer the world, it will only do so as the preaching of the Cross, and not by concessions to the natural reason. It is contrary to all natural logic that God should humble Himself to such an extremity. That death upon the tree of shame should be His supreme revelation is contrary to all the logic of the natural reason. But it is the logic of love; and love can hold its own against the logic of the mere understanding, for it has on its side the higher logic of truth.—*Luthardt*, "*Saving Truths*," 136-8.

[The caricature referred to, known as the *Graffito*, was on the plaster of the wall of one of the guard-rooms of the Pretorians, the body-guard, the household troops, of the Emperor, in the ruins of the Imperial Palace on the Palatine. The head of the Crucified One is probably that of an ass. (It was a common popular slander that the Christians worshipped an ass.) The worshipper is most likely a Pretorian, like the draughtsman of the caricature. A readily accessible engraving and description of the *Graffito* may be found in "*Italian Pictures*" (p. 55), Religious Tract Society, *Pen-and-Pencil Series*.]

Ver. 23. *The Victory of the Cross.*—Everything seemed to conspire to render its victory utterly impossible. Its origin was against it; it seemed but a Jewish sect. Its advocates and followers had nothing attractive about them, and belonged for the most part to the lower and uneducated classes. Its doctrine was a "stumbling-block"; it appeared a most vexatious "foolishness." Its reverence for God, too, was suspected, for the Christians, using no images of the gods, were taken for atheists. The worst and most immoral things were said of its mysterious rites. Public opinion was prejudiced against them, philosophy assailed Christianity with intellectual weapons, whilst the authorities opposed it with brute force. And yet it triumphed. So early as the reign of Nero it was, as Tacitus indignantly asserts, very widely diffused. (*Multa ade ingens*, *Ann.* xv. 44.) Nor did it avail to arrest its progress, that Nero, in order to divert from himself the guilt of the great conflagration of Rome, executed vast numbers of Christians: not so much, as Tacitus says, because they were guilty of this crime, as because they were hated by the whole human race. (Tac., *ut supra*.) Nevertheless, Christianity continued to spread. An interesting letter of the younger Pliny, governor of Bithynia, to his friend the Emperor Trajan, written about seventy years after the death of Christ, is still extant, distinctly pourtraying the state of the Christian cause at that time in the places which had been the scenes of St. Paul's and St. John's ministries. "This superstition," writes Pliny (*Epp.* x. 97), "has spread on all sides, in towns, in villages, and in the country; the temples of our gods stand deserted, and sacrifices have now for a long time ceased to be offered. I arrested a few girls called deaconesses, and put them to the torture, but discovered nothing besides excessive and pernicious superstition." . . . And a century later, Tertullian, in his *Apology* (c. 37), could say to the heathen, "We are but of yesterday, and yet we have taken possession of your whole country—towns, islands, the camp, the palace, the senate, the forum; we have left you only the temples!" Nor could the great persecutions—of which ten may be enumerated—ever hanging over the Christians arrest the triumphs of Christianity. No age, no sex, was spared; all the strength of the empire was put into requisition; certain of the most energetic of the emperors, such as Decius and Diocletian, considered it their special duty to root out Christianity from the world, because the very existence of the Roman Empire depended upon its extirpation. But the arm of the executioner failed before the fidelity of the Christians. Diocletian was obliged to give up his work; he retired from the stage, but Christianity remained, and in the person of Constantine ascended the imperial throne, and has since governed, even externally, the Roman world. —*Luthardt*, "*Fundamental Truths*," 267-9.

Ver. 23. *The Victory of the Cross over Heathenism.*—"As Heine puts it, while the gods of Greece were assembled at the feast of the immortals, and Hebe tripped round with her goblets of pleasant-tasting nectar, and infinite laughter rang round the happy banqueting board, and the feast was at its fairest, the music at its sweetest, suddenly there came gasping towards them a pale Jew, dripping with blood, a crown of thorns on His head, bearing a great cross of wood on His shoulder; and He cast the cross on the high table of the gods, so that the golden goblets trembled and fell, and the gods grew dumb and pale, and ever paler, till they melted in utter mist."—*From "A Lay Sermon" by Gerald Massey.*

Ver. 30. *Christ . . . Wisdom to us.*—"Verse 30, viewed apart from its connection, is a great text, and great in the greatness of its mystery. *Became*, not *was made*. This verb denotes a transition from one state or mode of subsistence to another, *e.g.* 'the Word became flesh,' *i.e.* being God, the Word passed into a mode of subsistence in which He was man as

well as God. Similarly we are said (2 Cor. v. 21) to '*become* the righteousness of God in Christ,' *i.e.* to pass from our low estate of sinful humiliation to the high level of God's perfect righteousness. Thus, according to ver. 30, the Son of God, when He entered into human nature, *entered* also into the Divine scheme of wisdom, and translated it into life. For unquestionably the substance of that scheme of wisdom was the union of the two natures in the Person of God's Son, together with the manifold benefits flowing from that union. Of this hidden counsel of redemption, which was willed and planned before Creation itself, Jesus Christ was in His Person the *embodiment*, and in all that He wrought and suffered, the historical manifestation and *pleroma*. Thus He became *wisdom from God*; not 'became from God'; the order of the Greek is against that view. Again, as the Father in heaven was the first cause or fountain of this wisdom, . . . so Christ on earth may be regarded in His work as a cistern gradually filling with this wisdom, and after His ascension overflowing with it from heaven into the larger cistern of His Church below. This overflow commenced on the Day of Pentecost. Thus He became wisdom *to us* from God, *i.e.* wisdom from God for us to receive. But this abstract counsel or wisdom of the Father, which was planned by Him before the ages were made, and which in the sphere of time became concrete in the Incarnate Son, what was it? What it more precisely was, both in its embodiment in Christ and in its relation to us men, is further defined in three heads. The eternal purpose is drawn out of its secret depths, so to speak, like a telescope of three lenses, in three evolutions, each in its own place: 1. Righteousness; 2. Sanctification; 3. Redemption. 1. Righteousness of *God the Father* imputed, not the righteousness of Christ, for *that* is nowhere in the New Testament said to be imputed. It is the proper fruit of Christ's *obedience* unto death, and the *imputation* of it to believers on earth approaches by degrees to *assimilation* precisely as progress is made in the inner life of sanctification. Indeed, the "both and" indicates this mutual correlation. Of the absolute Righteousness God is the giver because of Christ's meritorious Passion, and in it the saints, after the Resurrection, are *set indefectible*. The last link in this threefold chain of wisdom is *redemption*, *i.e.* of the body together with the soul and spirit in the resurrection of the saints at the Parousia. In brief, the whole means this: God - He alone is the first and efficient cause of your union and fellowship with Him who became flesh and translated into life and made actual in time the ideal plan of eternity, mediating for us the threefold benefit of that Divine counsel, righteousness imputed, holiness imparted, redemption consummated.—*Evans*, "*Speaker*."

# CHAPTER II.

## *CRITICAL NOTES.*

(*For many points, see Homiletic Analysis.*)

Ver. 1. **I.**—Slightly emphatic; *q.d.* "I was myself also in complete harmony of spirit and method with the lines of God's procedure" (as set out in i. 17-31). This verse takes up the personal thread from i. 17. **Speech.**—Lit. "*word.*" Compare with i. 18, iv. 20, *inter alia.* **Proclaiming.**—No more; that is his function, simple and restricted. **Testimony.**—Notice the striking and influentially supported reading "**mystery,**" which, if accepted, is a thoroughly Pauline thought. Retaining "*testimony,*" then preaching is not theorising, speculation, imagination; not what we fancy, or our heart says "*must be*"; but the "testimony of God." Not even our systematised deductions from the Word, unless these can be shown to be the "*testimony of God.*" To this the heart responds; cf. 1 Thess. i. 5.

Ver. 2. "**And that Jesus Christ as crucified**:" an additional restriction imposed upon himself, knowing well all the while that it would be an additional difficulty to the reason and heart of man. (In strict grammar the "*not*" belongs to "determined," and not to "*know.*")

Ver. 3.—Not to be illustrated by the A.V. of Acts xviii. 5, which, with the true reading, means "was under a sacred pressure that made him give himself more earnestly than ever to the preaching of the *Word.*" The weakness "was ethical, not physical" (Evans). So Ellicott. But Beet, "Any kind of inability, including bodily weakness caused by sickness." He adds, however, "This sense is suggested in Gal. iv. 13. But there is no hint of it here." This is too strong. Stanley sees allusion to 2 Cor. x. 10, xi. 30, xii. 5, 9, 10. Should we not add 2 Cor. xii. 7-9? Also, does it do honour to the promise of Matt. x. 19—which surely extends beyond any mere case of forensic apology—to speak as if the address at Athens were a mistake in topic and form, and had sent Paul to Corinth burdened with a sense of "failure"? "The Apostle preached Jesus at Athens, as well as at Corinth, Acts xvii. 18" (Ellicott). Certainly in preaching there the Resurrection he had not sought to conciliate human reason. It is not suggesting anything unworthy of Paul to notice that the special vision vouchsafed to him by Christ (Acts xviii. 9, 10) was the Lord's assistance of His servant in the face of such "blasphemy" and "opposition," as might well fill him with "fear and trembling" whether he should be adequate to the demand of the work in Corinth, in the face of all its difficulties. Cf. 2 Cor. vii. 5.

Ver. 4. **Preaching.**—The *matter*, not the act, *of preaching*, as in i. 21, which means not the method, "preaching," but the matter, *the thing preached.* **Enticing.**—"*Persuasive,*" seeking by argument to gain the assent of the intellect, and by rhetoric the suffrages of the heart. **Demonstration of the Spirit.**—See Separate Homily. The Holy Spirit. Choose between, (*a*) "The miracles wrought by the *power* of God through the agency of the Holy *Spirit*" (*e.g.* Beet, with Origen); and (*b*) "The conviction of the truth, wrought through my plain preaching of the Cross in the hearts of my hearers, whose spirit was touched by the Holy Spirit" (*e.g.* Evans or Ellicott). Choose (*b*), and compare the words of Longinus, that "Paul of Tarsus was the first who maintained positive assertion without elaborate proof." See how the method of mere "*positive assertion,*" accompanied by the "*power*" of the Spirit, carried conviction at Pentecost [well expounding John xvi. 8-11]. (*a*) narrows down to the special method for a few Churches in one century, a Divine method applicable, and exemplified, and vindicated, universally.

Ver. 5.—God's "*wisdom*" and "*power*" are together in i. 24.

Ver. 6. **Perfect.**—In (the customary Pauline) opposition to "*babes*" (iii. 1). Evans says: "No contrast here at all between Reason and Revelation, as some think, but between . . . the philosophy of God and the philosophy of the world. [But this runs up into that between Reason and Revelation.] It is not true that Christianity, in setting forth the bare argument of the Cross unto the salvation of believers, has no interior philosophy of its own for the few receptive of it. But observe that a contrast . . . is [also] indicated . . . between the deeper truths or higher wisdom of Christianity and the rudimentary lessons of it. This second contrast . . . brings to view two corresponding classes of believers, the full-grown and the infants; and, in addition to this, two corresponding modes of instruction. In fact, the Apostle had hitherto preached to his hearers in Corinth such broad facts of the scheme of Redemption as were level to their low apprehension; he had not dared to spread before them the treasures of the higher 'wisdom' meet only for the 'perfect'; to such pearls they in their crude state would have been swine." [But this latter part is rather exegetical of iii. 1 than of our

verse.] **Princes of this world.**—Evans: "The leading men of the Jews and of the Greeks, the Gentile potentates, including Hellenic philosophers and Hebrew doctors. Such '*come to nought*'; these luminaries with their vain lamps pale and go out before the day-star of Truth when it dawns from on high." "That gradual nullification of all real and enduring potency on their part which was brought about by the Gospel" (Ellicott). Any reference to Eph. vi. 12 can only be remote; these "*rulers*" did not, in any sense germane to Paul's argument, "*crucify*" Christ (ver. 8).

Ver. 7.—Connect, not "*we speak . . . in a mystery*," but "*God's wisdom in* (couched in [Evans]) *a mystery*." **Our glory.**—"All have come short of" (Rom. iii. 23), but in Christ we now "rejoice" again "in hope of, the glory of God" (Rom. v. 2). Christ is "the Lord of *the* glory" in ver. 7. It is His to give to all for whom it is prepared (Matt. xx. 23). "Christ in us" *is* "the hope of glory" (Col. i. 27). See His prayer (John xvii. 22, 24). "*Our glory*," then, is our whole recovered estate, as redeemed and saved through Christ; seen in a life of grace, and of holy fellowship with God here as His children (1 John iii. 1); broadening into the life of glory in heaven. The recovered image of God *is* the glory of human nature, as God meant manhood to be.

Ver. 9.—Note the more exact rendering in R.V. Quoted, somewhat *ad sensum*, from LXX. of Isa. lxiv. 4, with perhaps some influence of lii. 15 and lxv. 17. What God does for His people in such national and temporal deliverances as were in the view of the prophet, is done on the same lines as all His dealings of every kind with and for them. They are always beyond their expectation and hope. He shames their *faith* as often as their *fears*. The "*waiting*" is the "waiting" of "*love*"; full, therefore, of faith and patient trust. Also the unloving heart "*waits*" in vain, if it wait at all. It can see and know and receive nothing of all these "*prepared*" things. Note "*prepared*" (R.V.), carrying back thought to the original plan of God.

Ver. 10. (*Hath*) **revealed them to us by His Spirit.**—Makes it quite certain that, however true in such a connection the mere words may be, Paul is not thinking in ver. 9 of "heaven." "Heaven," moreover, is not one of those things internal, so to speak, to the being of God which "*the Spirit searches*."

Ver. 11.—The analogy is not a perfect one; but notice how like God man is: made in the image of God's self-conscious personality.

Ver. 12. **World.**—Here κόσμος; in vers. 6, 7, 8, αἰών. Liddon, *Bampton Lectures*, v., note, as to κόσμος, quotes from Bishop Martensen: "If we consider the effect of the Fall upon the course of historical development, not only in the case of individuals but of the race collectively, the term 'world' bears a special meaning different from that which it would have were the development of humanity normal. The cosmical principle having been emancipated by the Fall from its due subjection to the Spirit, and invested with a false independence, and the universe of creation having obtained with man a higher importance than really attaches to it, the historical development of the world has become one in which the advance of the kingdom of God is retarded and hindered. The created universe has, in a relative sense, life in itself, *including, as it does, a system of powers, ideas, and aims which possess a relative power. This relative independence, which ought to be subservient to the kingdom of God, has become a fallen 'world-autonomy.'* Hence arises the Scriptural expression '*this* world.' By this expression the Bible conveys the idea that it regards the world not only ontologically, but in its definite and actual state, the state in which it has been since the Fall. 'This world' means the world content with itself, in its own independence, its own glory; the world which disowns its dependence on God as its Creator. 'This world' regards itself not as the *creature* (κτίσις), but only as the κόσμος, as a system of glory and beauty which has life in itself, and can give life. The historical embodiment of 'this world' is heathendom, which honoureth not God as God." [For the distinction between "*world*" and "*age*," see chap. v., § D, of Homiletic Analysis, *Appended Note*.] In the prevalent reading two words are used for "*knoweth*" here, perhaps "slightly distinguished" (Stanley), as in John xxi. 16, 17. See 2 Cor. v. 16. **Freely given.** One word; germ of the thought afterward expanded so largely in Rom. v. 15 *sqq*. Note in vers. 10-13 the order: The Spirit searches in God, what then He brings and imparts, along with Himself, to us; and then next speaks out to others through us; again finding acceptance for them in their case by His own demonstration and power. First and last, and at each intermediate, point it is all the Spirit! God's thoughts, as the Spirit discloses them, spoken in the Spirit's words!

Ver. 13. **Spiritual with spiritual.**—Exposition, not Grammar, must decide here between, (*a*) "Comparing ["combining" (R.V. margin), "matching" (Evans)] spiritual *things* with spiritual *things*," and (*b*) "*Interpreting* spiritual things by spiritual things," or (*c*) "Interpreting spiritual *things* to spiritual *men*." (*a*) and (*b*) approximate. Stanley supports "interpreting" by the usage of the LXX. in Gen. xl. 8, 16, xli. 15; Dan. v. 12, 15, 26. Evans supports "*matching*" by 2 Cor. x. 12; and also prefers "matching spiritual truths with spiritual minds," which suits well vers. 6, 14. In reality the sentence is almost *gnomic* in form and fulness of application. (*c*) is only a special case of (*a*); the "comparing" of

(*a*) may be for the purpose of the "interpreting" in (*b*). [We are reminded of the loud exclamation of the minister in the early Church, just previous to the "consecration" of the bread and wine at the Lord's Supper, "Τὰ ἅγια τοῖς ἁγίοις." "Holy (things) to holy (persons)!" In like manner there are "*spiritual things*" which can only congruously go with "*spiritual words*," or "*things*," or "*persons*."]

Ver. 14. **Discerned.**—Lit. "examined"; *same* word as in ix. 3; as if the "*natural*" man *questioned* the "*spiritual*" thing; but it would not yield up to him its secret (Gen. xxxii. 29; Judg. xiii. 18; Isa. ix. 6). So in ver. 15 and iv. 3, 4. Cognate word also with that for "*comparing*," ver. 13.

Ver. 15.—Ellicott gives, as examples of these spiritual judgments, the wise, clear, far-reaching decisions in vi. 1-4, vii. 1 *sqq.*, vii. 20 *sq.*, xi. 3 *sq.*, xiv. 34 *sq.*, xiv. 6 *sq.*

Ver. 16.—LXX. in Isa. xl. 13, here quoted, uses "*mind*" (νοῦς) for "*Spirit*" (*ruach* in Heb.). Paul follows what serves his purpose, with perfect fidelity to the truth of the matter discussed. **Mind.**—Not at all in the vague, loose sense of "character," or "temper," or "disposition." "We know, the knowledge is in our possession, what God in Christ designs and desires for His people; we are taken by the Spirit into the deeps of His redeeming thought toward our race." [In the same way "spirit" is never in New Testament used for characteristic temper, or style, or prevailing idea. Ver. 12, *e.g.*, means almost certainly a *personal* spirit.]

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Whole Chapter.*

A contrast runs throughout. I. **There are two types of men.**—"*Natural*," "*spiritual*." And so—

II. **There are two worlds of facts**; one being "*the things of God*." Correspondent to these there are—

III. **Two ways of getting to know**; one being by the "*demonstration of the Spirit*." And further there are in close parallel—

IV. **Two ways of preaching the Gospel.**

I. **Natural men and spiritual men.**—1. The *former word is* suitably, truly, *descriptive*. In any extreme development of the type, they are men as men are by nature; they are what men might have been, what men do again become, apart from the "free gift" of the grace of "the Spirit of Christ" (Rom. viii. 9). The unregenerate life, and the backslider's life after regeneration, tend to revert to type. In fallen human nature, *per se*, "dwelled no good thing" (Rom. vii. 18). There is not actually found the unrelieved blackness and darkness of *mere* human nature, but all modifying goodness and light are grace, not nature. Perhaps noble men, but "*natural*."

2. But "*natural*" is *not the equivalent of Paul's word*. Nor is "*carnal*" in, *e.g.*, iii. 1, though it is with equal truth descriptive, and is set in equally strong contrast with "*spiritual*" men.

3. His word is Jude's word, where we have "sensual" (Jude 19), expounded as equivalent to, or at least consequent upon, their "not having the Spirit." James, too, designates by it the wisdom of the "*natural man*" (Jas. iii. 15; "sensual").

4. The word, like that for "*spiritual*," is one of a pair of correlates of "*soul*" and "*spirit*." [1 Thess. v. 23; but also consistently distinguished by Paul throughout his terminology of human nature; and, whatever be the nature and value of the distinction—a very difficult question—it is one preserved and observed in Old Testament Hebrew as consistently as in New Testament Greek.] As Paul observed men, a deep cleavage separates them into two sharply definite classes. The cleavage begins with the opposition between "*soul*" and "*spirit*," but runs through all the life of men. [It is coincident with the line which parts "*them that are perishing*" from "*them that are being saved*" (*e.g.* 2 Cor. ii. 15). The line lies between those out of Christ and those "*in Christ*"; between those who are "*the world*" in John, and in his Master's terminology, and those "*born again*." "*Soulish*" has been proposed as an equivalent for

Paul's description; or "*animal*," but this is in many cases misleading; "*animal-souled*" is a compromise, fairly acceptable and useful.] It should be noted that the underlying opposition is not between the Spirit of God and the "*soul*" in man, but between the human "spirit" and the "soul" in man. [Though the "spirit" of man is so constantly dealt with as under the gracious influences of the Spirit of God, and the two are so nearly allied, that in fact, and in the exegesis of particular passages, it is often hard to keep them apart.]

5. Some "*natural men*" live a really "animal" life. To satisfy the body's need of food and sleep, to gratify its passions, seems all their life. "*What they know naturally as brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves*" (Jude 10). There are many of a higher type, in whom is much that is loving and lovable; they are tender, affectionate parents, firm friends, faithful servants, good masters; in business diligent, honest, honourable. In many the powers of mind are cultured to a high degree, [though it is the witness of fact, in ancient and modern culture, how the highest cultivation of the intellect and the tastes may coexist with utter selfishness, and even with the crudest sensuality]; the mind is well furnished, and the tastes are refined to an extreme of delicacy. Yet there might almost be no God and no Godward side to their own nature, for anything that appears in life, or motive, or principle. At their best they are highly developed types of the uttermost of which "body" plus "soul" is capable, save that personality still remains, a trait of God's image not altogether lost.

6. The "*spiritual man*" may be of very humble origin and station, he may be only scantily educated, but in Him the "*spirit*" is awakened and dominant. [Language cannot be very exact on this topic, but] it is as though there were a something in him akin to God who is a Spirit, a something capable of looking God in the face, and knowing and being known; susceptible of, responsive to, the activities of the personal Spirit of God; and this no longer, as it were, dormant, overlaid, buried, or only awake to struggle in vain against the dominance of the "soul." The quickened "spirit" and its powers are now the potent factor in a life which is thus made "new." Take all of which man is capable apart from the distinctive work of the Spirit of God, and develop it to the highest degree, the man remains a "*natural man*." Awaken the "*spirit*," ennoble it, enthrone it as supreme, by the indwelling of the Spirit of God, and—culture or no culture in the ordinary sense—you have the life, higher or lower, of the "*spiritual man*," often with a very real culture due to the supremacy of his Godward life. [Cf. pp. 49, 51, *antea*.]

7. On one side of his line of cleavage Paul ranges "*princes of this world*," on the other "*perfect*" men in the Church. "*Princes;*" for an early current understanding of Ps. ii. saw it fulfilled when "Herod and Pontius Pilate," and their helpers, "gathered themselves together against the Anointed" One of God, the "*Lord of glory*" (Acts iv. 24-27). Yet these are only representatives of other "*princes*," intellectual, social, financial, literary, the leaders of fashions of thought and speech and opinions and morals; often more really than the titular and hereditary ones the rulers of the life of "*this world*" of "*natural men*"; the men who make their "*age*," just because they are *of* the age, neither behind it, nor too violently and extremely in advance of it to make it march with their step and dance while they pipe. Great men; and yet less than the men whose measure and whose outlook is adjusted to the scale of a larger *Æon*, the eternal, already ever around and with us, and yet "to come." They are "*of the age*," and according to its pattern, and measure, and mind, only. They, and it, and their "*wisdom*," all vanish and "*come to nought*" together.

8. The "*perfect*" men are the large men; the *men*—no longer babes, but arrived at, or fast approaching, the prime of moral manhood, in its stature and its trained and experienced capacities. The very "*princes*" have but a maimed

humanity; the dormant, dead, forgotten "spirit" is an integral part of human nature. Human nature is an incomplete, "lop-sided" thing if the spirit be undeveloped. These "*princes*" may, Saul-like, overtop by a head or more, the average of their "*world*," but their feet stand on its level.

9. The "*perfect*" are only comparatively so. There is no absolute perfection save in God, and to it He does not make progress; He has never had less than perfection in its absolute measure. The perfection of the creature, and even of the "*new creation*" (2 Cor. v. 17), is relative, always *becoming*, never reaching finality. To a creaturely perfection which could not grow into a higher perfection the next stage would be Death. Still, the contrast is so great and so definite, between the childhood of the "*spiritual man*" and his adult manhood, that this latter is regarded as a distinct perfection, already reached by the men of whom Paul thinks. The man who has reached his physical majority does not, in many senses, cease to grow still, to the last. In the spiritual life there is no "last"; the growth of the "*perfect*" goes on in glory. The "*princes*" are all "*natural men*," some of them being the best specimens of these. The "*perfect*" are all "*spiritual men*," with a new life and its equipment of new faculties, and with the knowledge of a new world correlative to these.

II. **Two worlds of facts corresponding to the two types of men.**—"*Spirituals match with spirituals*," as Evans renders ver. 13. (See Critical Notes.) "Natural men" in like manner match with, and are themselves examples of, the things of a "*natural*" world. The cleavage extends here also. The one world is that of "*the things of the Spirit* of God" (ver 14). [Note how these are not exactly the same as "*the things of God*," "*the deep things of God.*" These are mainly the purposes and designs and the facts of the very Being of God. They are paralleled with "*the things of a man.*" If the thing may be said, they are the world within the Self of God; in some degree analogous to the world within the self of a man, which unless the man please to disclose it, no other man can "*know.*" As a man can, so God can keep Himself a Secret, unknown, unknowable, except to His own Spirit, which "*searcheth all things, even the deep things of God*" (vers. 10, 11); His inscrutable Being, the counsels and purposes of the Divine mind and heart.] These "*things of the Spirit of God*" are a world revealable and knowable. They are, in part, knowledge and blessedness "*prepared for those that love God.*" [So Paul gives the sense, gladly availing himself of the words of the LXX. in Isa. lxiv. 4.] They have been—even Gospel privileges and a hope for Gentiles—a "*mystery*" (ver. 7). They had been the secrets of God's mind and heart towards mankind; long concealed, or only revealed gradually, as God had spoken "in many portions and many manners to the fathers" (Heb. i. 1): but now the time has come for the veil fully to be drawn back. The secret may at last be told, the "*mystery*" be a mystery no longer; the blessings may be given and may be enjoyed. God designs that they shall; they have been all along, "*before the world*," "*ordained unto the glory*" of the initiated ones, *the illuminati* (? Heb. vi. 4), the "*perfect*," that "*love*" God. They now cry, "O how great is Thy goodness which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee!" (Ps. xxxi. 19). And it is not only goodness but "*wisdom*" which moves their adoring, grateful wonder to a praise that becomes more and more fervent, with the growing disclosures and the larger impartations and enjoyments of this new world of the "*things of the Spirit of God.*" And when at last the correspondence between the "*spiritual man*" and his "*spiritual*" environment is complete; when his body is "*a spiritual body*" (1 Cor. xv. 44), lending itself as a perfect organ and vehicle to a life ruled by the "*spirit*" in him; when his world is wholly that of God and spiritual things—Heaven; then his word will be, "*O the depth of the riches of the wisdom . . . of God!*" [Rom. xi. 33; where note, too, the quotation of Isa. xl. 13, which also appears, in the same connection,

in our chapter (ver. 16). We are on one of the familiar heart-tracks of Paul's meditations, and pass the same landmarks of Scripture quotation and of inspired speculation.] There is "*a wisdom of this world*," but it is of no avail here. These things are reserved for those that "*love*" God. It is not, either here or in Rom. viii. 28, any "favouritism" towards His children, which reserves exclusively to them the knowledge and enjoyment of the world of "*things spiritual*." If "all things work together for those" only "who love God," and if the things unseen by natural eye, unheard by natural organ, unthought of and undesired by the natural "*heart*," are also the heritage of these alone, it is no arbitrary narrowing of the range of availableness and privilege. Just as in the closely connected declaration of John (1 John iii. 2), "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," there is no arbitrary concealment. In that case it is simple impossibility which bars the way to disclosure and knowledge; the earthly life presents so few analogies to the heavenly, that it gives no terms into which to translate the heavenly into earthly language or thought, or intelligibly to express to us any but the barest information about that life. [The Father, like the Son, had rather tell than conceal all that may help His children (John xiv. 2).] In this case it is because only love is capable of knowing; such "love in the Spirit" (Col. i. 8) as binds God and His "*spiritual*" ones together. Even the "little children know the Father (1 John ii. 13). But the fulness of the "*wisdom*" is only for the ears, or the knowledge and experience, of the up-grown children—"*the perfect*." Two great facts of this spiritual world, thus sealed to the natural man and his best-trained faculties, are "*the Lord of glory*" and "*the spiritual man*." In John's words again, "The world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not" (1 John iii. 1). The inability to "know" us is not only *parallel* to the inability to know Him; it is the *consequence* of that inability. God "reveals His Son" in the soul (Gal. i. 16); He is the central Fact of the new world, and, He once known, all else becomes clear. In an ignorance that was condemning, but still in ignorance, they "*slew*," as Paul had himself once persecuted, the "*Lord of glory*" (Acts iii. 17; 1 Tim. i. 13). How shall any man "call Jesus Lord but *by the Spirit*"? (1 Cor. xii. 3). He is unknown even to those "*natural men*" who write, some of them, Lives of Jesus, and very confidently estimate His position in the history of mankind, and amongst the religious teachers of the race; or His personal character; or the "originality" of His teaching; and the like; pronouncing the most confident verdicts, to which nobody listens with more amusement than does the man who really knows "the *Lord of glory*" as his Saviour and Friend and Life. [The friend, the brother, who has lived with a man for years, smiles at the biography and portrait done by a stranger.] "*The spiritual man*" himself also is a fact outside the knowledge of "*the natural man*." They may live together in every-day, close, intercourse, but impervious spirit to spirit, the spiritual man quite an inexplicable person to the natural; they may have many topics and interests in common, yet they are in different worlds. "*The spiritual man knows all things*,"—"*the natural man*" amongst the rest; but "*no man*" naturally "*knows*" him. The analogies of the natural world are true in their suggestions here,—the higher always understands the lower, but the lower cannot know the higher. The poet understands what it must be to have no poetry, but the man devoid of a sense for poetry does not understand the poet. The educated man can understand the uneducated, but the uneducated cannot understand him. Breadth understands narrowness, but narrowness cannot comprehend what it is to be "broad." [In the railway-cars there is passage from first-class to third-class, but not from third into first.] The father understands the child; the child does not understand the man. The man understands how many limitations narrow the life of the brutes; they do not even know how many possibilities the man has. The "*spiritual man*" under-

stands the world he has quitted, the "*natural*" life he has left behind—he was "natural" himself once; the "*natural man*" cannot read him in return. The sources of his life; his enjoyments; his motives, even when doing what is outwardly what they themselves do,—all these are a life hid, as Christ is hidden, hidden in God (Col. iii. 3), from the "*natural man.*" *Different worlds!* Hence—

III. **Two kinds of knowledge.**—1. He who is *of* the world may know its "*wisdom.*" If he be one of its "*princes,*" then his cultivated talents, his advantages of position, his friendships, his library, his industry, his money, may enable him to master it all fully. There are *practical* limitations to encyclopædic knowledge; but there is no necessary and inevitable barrier between a "*prince of this world*" and all the "*wisdom of this world.*" Indeed, are we to go further? To do so is not in the direction or temper of our time and its thought; even the religious thought of our age tends to minimise the amount of the supernatural which it postulates, or admits and reckons with. Yet men may "*receive the spirit of the world,*" and so arrive at knowledge. 2. Are we to connect this with the fragments of knowledge given to us by pure revelation on this theme, which speaks of one who is "the prince of this world" (John xii. 31, xiv. 30, xvi. 11), who is indeed its "*god*" (2 Cor. iv. 4), a "spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. ii. 2)? Must we carry out the principle, which everywhere holds throughout Scripture, of a parallel, a counterfeit, a parody, of the facts of the kingdom of light by the kingdom of darkness, and so see suggested a *personal* "*spirit of the world*" set over against the personal "*Spirit* which is of God"? The strongly definite opposition is at any rate here in Paul's inspired language, and strongly suggests that behind the world's maxims and principles and habits of thinking and life, the "*spirit* of the world" in the modern, vague, but not Scriptural sense, there is a personal source of its activity and predominant character. 3. The spiritual man certainly "*receives the Spirit which is of God.*" Natural powers and their use, "*the eye, ear, heart,*" may make a man know the natural world; it is his appropriate and natural setting and environment; there he is at home. He is part of it. "*The spiritual man*" is part of the spiritual world, and gets to know of it as one detail of the consequences of the grace of *the* Spirit in awakening *his* "spirit," and quickening its faculties into ability and activity. In the new world of Divine things Life brings in its train Knowledge. Born into it, the spiritual man is at home there. 4. That Spirit of God is "at home" amongst "*the deep things of God.*" The whole meaning of that "*mystery of God*"—that secret purpose of the Divine mind and heart which, in summary, in aim, in goal, "*is* **Christ**" [Col. ii. 2, in most critical editions of the New Testament]—has now become, so to speak, His property,—"*the things of the Spirit of God.*" He only could know; He only can reveal and impart. He mediates between the mind of God and the mind of man. What He "*searches*" out and knows there, He discloses and imparts here. He has these truths and blessings that they may "*be freely given to us*" as if "*by God*" Himself. He knows, and by His intermediary office and teaching we have, the whole "*mind of the Lord.*" "*The Lord?*" Why not go further and say "*the mind of Christ,*" for "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead" (Col. i. 9, 19)? [5. Very profound and far-reaching are the suggestions of this interchangeableness of language: "*the deep things of God*" passes over into "*the mind of the Lord,*" and this again becomes next "*the mind of Christ.*" Father and Son have no counsels or desires for man which are not shared by both; never do They work or think for man on any independent, or possibly divergent, plan. And then, again, when these "deep things" of "*the mind of the Lord*" pass, as it were, through the hands of the Spirit as gracious gifts to our spirit, they become His own "*things.*"] 6. The man of the world peremptorily, or even

superciliously, dismisses all we profess that we have and know, as "*foolishness*" (ver. 14). To him it is; to us it is "*wisdom*," "*hidden (wisdom)*" (ver. 7), wisdom that shall abide when all his "*comes to nought.*" No wonder! He knocks in vain at the door of the shrine into which we are led, that we may be initiated into these Divine secrets. When he finds entrance impossible, he turns away and declares that within, from all he can hear, or see, or make out from these "*spiritual men*," there is nothing but "*foolishness.*" 7. We do not come at our knowledge in virtue of any conquest of the spiritual world. We had no eyes, nor ears, nor heart for it, any more than the "*natural man*" has. But we "*received the Spirit*," we "*received the things of the Spirit*"; we know just as much as was "*freely given*," and as we took (vers. 12, 14) He gave us eyes, ears, hearts, new powers for the new world of our new life.

IV. Hence **two ways of teaching** may be conceived of and attempted.—1. How will you approach and convert these "*natural men*"? Speak "*spiritual things*" to "*natural men*"? Try it, and fail. They do not comprehend you. Speak "*natural*" knowledge to them. Certainly they will understand that. But that is not the office of a Christian teacher. No doubt, if he speak of the things of their world in terms of their thought, and with human artifice of language, he may win himself audience and reputation. 2. But Paul is a model, who "*determined*" that he would "*know nothing*" of "*the world's wisdom*," when he came to Corinth. Let the "*natural men*" teach "*natural men*" "*natural*" thoughts! Paul will begin, and will end—but that there is no end to the Theme—with "*Jesus Christ*"! Of all "*the deep things of God*," of all the now revealed secrets, the "*mysteries of God*," He is the chief and the Sum. Inexhaustible as a subject, inexhaustible as a possession of the soul! Paul did not on Mars' Hill, a few weeks before, begin with Him—perhaps prudently and rightly, remembering his audience. But, at any rate, when he came to speak of Jesus Christ and judgment "some mocked." Now, in beginning work at Corinth, he had settled beforehand upon this plan of operations, and "*Jesus Christ*" was both to be central to it and to fill up all the circle to its uttermost circumference. He would be deaf, blind, dumb, in every direction but *Christ*! Would see nothing, hear nothing, speak nothing else. The Jew would be staggered, offended, perhaps turned aside. What if the fish would not look at his bait at all? These would-be philosophic Greeks of Corinth; these busy, wealthy, mercantile men; these artisans and sailors and slaves,—what of them, if he preached the Godhead and Resurrection of a man hanged on a Roman gallows, outside the walls of Jerusalem? Suppose these, too, should refuse even to listen to the "*foolishness of*" *such* "*a preaching*" (i. 23)? "If the people will not listen, the preacher is a failure at the outset." So "*human wisdom*" would suggest to him, as it does to the teacher now. And had he not better be prudent, and catch the attention and tickle the fancy with "*words of man's wisdom*"? Plenty of teachers of rhetoric in a Greek city (Acts xix. 9), if he needed teaching. No! But at least would it not be the right and sensible thing to cast his "*testimony*" [according to the old reading in ver. 2] into some quasi-philosophic shape, or to use "*persuasive words*" (ver. 4, R.V.)? No! He would not decorate his "*speech*"; he would not adapt his "*preaching.*" He dares not. His function is only to "*proclaim*" (ver. 1). He has nothing to do with the matter of the message, but to speak it out, as he is first told it. Whether it seem "*wisdom*" or "*folly*," that is not his responsibility. He is only the messenger; let the Sender and Author of the message see to the rest. "You have it as I get it, unmixed, uncorrupted." The "*thing preached*" (margin) should be in its plainest form; the "*speech*" should be a dress as simple for the simple thought. To do otherwise—to wreathe the cross with flowers of thought and rhetoric, till men could find no Cross, no Sacrifice, and no Blood;

to take an atoning sufferer from off it, and nail to it an amiable, noble, pure, wise, unselfishly loving sufferer—would not be faithful to his Master, or do honour to the Spirit. Who was Paul that he should even leave the way open, supposing such methods to have succeeded, for any man to say, "Paul's preaching attracted me; Paul's way of putting his Gospel convinced me. I am of Paul"? No man should think, or say, if he arrived at belief, that his "*faith stood in the wisdom of man.*" God forbid! 3. It would be unfaithful to Christ, dishonouring to the Spirit, and, moreover, it would be useless. Corinth is not to be taken by that method of attack! No way into the human heart by that road! The simplest form of the message, in the simplest language,—"*Jesus Christ*," and "*He a crucified Jesus*" in addition; this, if only it were full of the "*power of God*," should come "*with the demonstration of the Spirit.*" The Spirit should make even the "*natural man*" *see* and "*know*" and accept this Jesus. He should furnish an *evidence* peculiarly His own, which should carry with it a force of *proof* and of *conviction* that should sweep away before it ignorance, pride, prepossessions, prejudice, and carry "*the things of the Spirit of God*" into the world of the "*natural man's*" understanding and heart and life. The Higher should, with a holy violence, make for itself an entrance into the Lower. Let other teachers try "*persuasive words*," arguments of the most cogent, if they will, and endeavour to win from the proud intellect and the prouder heart, the patronage of an acceptance of their "Gospel," such as it is! The Spirit of God will Himself use the "*foolish*" matter, put in no "*persuasive*" way, but in blunt, repellant nakedness of "speech," and will "*demonstrate*" the truth and the method as the "*wisdom of God.*" Even a preacher who is hampered with physical "*weakness*" of poor health or fatigue, to say nothing of "*a thorn in the flesh*"; who, moreover, is burdened and anxious about his work and his companions; who is full of "*fear*" as he thinks of what is before him; if only he be content to *speak in* "*words which the Spirit teacheth*" (ver. 13), can succeed, even in Corinth! By such methods of teaching even the natural man may come to saving knowledge of spiritual things.

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 1—5.

*A Model Preacher.*

**I. The man. II. The message. III. The method.**

I. We naturally and rightly conceive of Paul as one of the greatest moral forces of his day, a man more important to the life of his age and to that of all future ages, than any man then living. But he did not so stand out to his contemporaries. The leading Jews in Rome (Acts xxviii. 21), though intercourse between the capital and every part of the empire was frequent and fairly easy, knew, they seem to say, a good deal about the stir which the Nazarene faith was everywhere making, but very little about Paul himself, even as a "ringleader of the sect." At all events, from even Judæa there had not come letters such as would have indicated that the authorities there attached pre-eminent importance to the prisoner remitted by Festus to Nero. Out of their sight, out of their way, out of their mind. Plainly at Corinth, and probably elsewhere, the very Christian Church did not, as we do, see Paul overtopping—a Saul amongst them—the rest of the Apostolic band. He came and went, "one of these Jews," somehow not much in favour with his fellow-Israelites; and except for an occasional tumult, the work he was doing went quietly on, unknown to the cultured, fashionable, busy world. "The world knew not" (1 John iii. 1) Paul or his Churches. "Gallio cared for none of these things;" the exalted Roman gentleman attached very little importance to such *canaille* and their squabbles! We must not read back our present knowledge into the look of

things then; and, above all, must not unduly magnify the man by looking at him through the spectacles of the results of his labours. What the Corinthians saw was a man of no striking appearance, perhaps in physical weakness, perhaps betraying his "*fear and much trembling.*" He was not deficient in moral courage, as many an incident shows, and repeatedly met danger with calmness. But he was not a "fighting" character, and may even have been constitutionally timid. [So Howson thinks, Hulsean Lectures, *Character of St. Paul,*" lect. ii. He refers to Monod's sermon on the "Tears of St. Paul" (Acts xx. 18, 19, etc.). 2 Cor. ii. 4; Phil. iii. 18. He points out the three reassuring visions, Acts xviii. 19, xxiii. 11, xxvii. 24, and compares 2 Cor. vii. 5. See further the depression of spirits in anticipation of the issue of his third missionary journey, at Miletus and Tyre and Cæsarea. We see a strong craving for personal sympathy, almost to the point of dependence. "*Alone,*" 1 Thess. iii. 1, 10, 11; 2 Cor. ii. 13; Philem. 11, 14; 2 Tim. i. 15, iv. 9, 10. See also in Critical Notes.] No preacher or worker should feel Paul far away from him, knowing nothing of his feelings, exempt from his anxieties about his work and his qualifications for it, and his little likelihood of success. Very human, often very much "*down,*" commanding no world-wide reputation or respect; little known, and less loved, except by his converts, and not always by them; but "*made* able as a minister," etc. (2 Cor. iii. 6). The "earthen vessel" very "earthen," to the eyes of his contemporaries (2 Cor. iv. 7) The "meek man has inherited the earth."

II. **The message.**—One topic, only one—"*Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.*" 1. Let a modern instance illustrate this. "*Ned* Wright, a well-known South London evangelist, said [*coram me*, H. J. F.] that when he was once preaching on or near London Bridge a half-tipsy man thrust himself into the crowd gathered round, and cried out, "Look here, Ned! I am Jesus Christ!" "Come here, then;" and the crowd made way. "Let me look at your hands. Hold them up!" Ned made a show of examining one, and then flung it away from him with a contemptuous gesture: "You are not Jesus Christ. You are not *my* Jesus Christ. My Jesus Christ has nail-holes in His hands. Be off with you!" And the poor fellow slunk away ashamed, amidst the laughter of the crowd, who did not the less intelligently listen whilst Wright took advantage of the incident to drive home the lesson that the sinful and guilty heart wants a Jesus Christ that is *crucified.* 2. It is a true instinct which has made preaching "*popular*" in the best sense to centre in the *cross* of Christ. Or, better, the Spirit of God has thus rightly guided the successful "popular" preacher. Christian speculation, the philosophical study of the Christian system, may rightly bring the Incarnation into greater prominence than has often been given to it. But in every time of Evangelical revival in the Church, in every time of personal concern because of conviction of sin, it is seen that the centre of gravity of an effective Gospel for a guilty, unholy soul is at the Cross, not first at the Manger. Bunyan was sketching his allegory on the lines of often-repeated and self-justifying experiment, when he made the pilgrim's burden fall from his shoulders at the Cross. The old experience of the early missionaries of the Moravian Church in Greenland is repeated in every successful mission-field: the best place to begin at in teaching Christian doctrine is the Cross. When the heart has found rest at the Cross, it can then return to the Manger, and the Babe, and the Incarnation, and the perfect Manhood and the perfect Example of an ideal human life. But the Cross meets the first and most urgent need of an awakened soul. 2. Nor is it sufficient to make the Cross merely an incident in the Example, even though perhaps the crowning, culminating point of its self-sacrifice, and of its appeal to the human heart. It is all this; but to make it, and offer it as, no more than this, fails to give due weight to the teaching of

experience, or to acknowledge the perpetually recurring demand of the awakened conscience and the troubled heart for some such satisfaction as has always been, as a matter of fact, given when the Cross has been an Altar bearing a Sacrifice for Sin. The evangelist finds the Cross, with a vicarious, expiatory, reconciling Offering, his best lever for lifting the lowest, whilst it meets the universal heart as found in the highest. It is his true cure-all for all cases of spiritual distress. It has been a despised sling and stone only; but it has brought down the giant! The pathetic crucifixion of Josef Meyer at Oberammergau does not, with all its dramatic vividness, so prove a revolutionary moral force. Nor did the real crucifixion of Peter, or of thousands of Jews by Titus, so move mankind. Was Paul crucified for you? For that is the very centre and heart of what Christ is to you. 3. In giving this narrower prominence to "*Jesus Christ . . . crucified*," Paul is following the lead of even the Gospel history. [Cf. Dale, *Atonement*, lect. ii., who says:] "All the four Evangelists are agreed about the exceptional importance of our Lord's last sufferings. Only two of them relate the circumstances of His Birth, which we might have supposed none of them would have omitted. Only two tell the story of the Temptation. The Sermon on the Mount appears neither in the second Gospel nor the fourth. St. John says nothing about the Transfiguration, the agony in the Garden, or the institution of the Lord's Supper. The story of the Resurrection and of the appearance of the Risen Christ to His Disciples occupies only twenty verses in St. Matthew's narrative; only twenty—perhaps only nine—in St. Mark's; and St. John appears to have said in thirty verses all he intended to say, and to have added another five-and-twenty at the request of his friends. St. Matthew tells us nothing of our Lord's Ascension into heaven, nor does St. John; and even if the closing verses of St. Mark's Gospel came from his own hand, he tells us nothing more than the bare fact. . . . Time and place are left indefinite, and our Lord's parting words to His Disciples and the vision of angels are passed over in silence. But the Betrayal, the Arrest, the appearance before Caiaphas, Peter's denial, the cry of the people for the release of Barabbas, and the Crucifixion of our Lord, Pilate's judgment, the inscription . . . on the cross, are . . . in all the four Gospels; and they all bring the story to a close with words which indicate that at the very moment of our Lord's Death there was no loss of consciousness or exhaustion of strength." He proceeds to show that in the deaths of the Old Testament there is no precedent for this elaborate detail, and in those of the New Testament no true parallel. He discusses the suggestion that all this was only the lingering of love over the particulars of last hours, or to give the clearest demonstration of the evil heart of the Jewish rulers, and concludes: "A careful examination of the Gospels will lead us to (decide that) in the importance which they attach to the Death of our Lord, they are but following the line of His own thought. To Him His Death was distinctly present from the very commencement of His ministry." After Pentecost, indeed, Peter and his fellow-apostles "gave witness, with great power, of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (Acts iv. 33). But the Resurrection is an integral part of the "Doctrine of the Cross." The actual crucifying needed no emphasising in Jerusalem; the complementary fact, which gave the death any meaning and value and power, needed clear and vigorous proclamation. Without the resurrection and intercession, the Cross is no Gospel of an atonement; it is a mere death upon a gibbet. When Peter declared the resurrection, he was "preaching *Christ* crucified" in the full significance of the Messiah's name and work.

III. **His method.**—"*Proclaiming the testimony, the mystery, of God.*" Assertion, not argument. Announcing a fact, not propounding any theory, the result of his own study or excogitation. He had been taken behind the veil and shown one of God's secrets; now he came forth commissioned to impart it to

others. But only to tell it out; not to add to it, or mutilate it, or refine upon it. "*Put in trust* with the Gospel" (1 Thess. ii. 4), he had simply to pass it on, to offer it, in its entirety. He had only to stand up as a witness, bearing "*a testimony.*" A method widely different from that of the discussions of the Porch, the Grove, the Academy, where everything might be challenged by the learner, and the teacher must support with reasons. A very narrow function, a very restricted office and work. But it is the *preacher's* right place, and the limit of his sphere. He should first go in and learn the secret of the Lord, and then come forth simply to tell and testify of "what he has seen and heard." [John iii. 11, "**We**" = Christ and all His representatives pursue the same method. 1 John i. 3.] [It is a principle which may be illustrated by a modern case, closely analogous. When Dr. Duff first sailed for India in 1830, the *Lady Holland* was wrecked on Dassen Island, a sandbank off Capetown. All eventually found safe landing on a higher point, a penguin haunt. A sailor, walking along the shore looking for eggs, found Duff's Bagster's Bible and Scottish Psalm Book, given him at his ordination, both safe because of the chamois-leather case. He had taken out eight hundred volumes in every branch of human knowledge—journals, notes, memoranda, essays, "as dear to a student as his own flesh"; all were lost. In the first flush of his student success, he "had only half parted with them," when he became a missionary. He could never lose the culture they gave him. But the loss seemed to him *didactic*, a speaking incident, that all save these two perished, or were reduced to pulp. "The memory of Dassen Island was never absent from what he regarded as temptations to literary self-indulgence" (Dr. Smith's *Duff*, i. 258). God's Word was the only book for the missionary, and for the minister of the Gospel. More exactly parallel to Paul's determination is this:] Dr. McAll, of Paris, recently deceased, said that many a time, when his father, the still more famous Dr. McAll, one of the brilliant galaxy of pulpit orators of the early half of the century, was at the zenith of his fame, and was being followed everywhere by admiring and deeply affected crowds of hearers, he has seen him come home and sit down, bursting into a flood of tears, distressed that all the popular favour and all the effect of his preaching seemed to mean so little of real conversions to God. His son read the fact in the light of this text, and feared that the "*excellency of speech*" had really been an obstacle to the success of his father's ministry, and therefore deliberately adopted a simpler style for his own. Paul bore his witness in the plainest and in entirely inartificial language, lest he should so wreathe and overlay the Cross with the flowers of human thinking or rhetoric that the Cross itself could not, as it were, be seen. Is there, then, no place in preaching "*Christ crucified*" for the faculty of moving speech, of wit, of clear reasoning, or of any other gift of God's bestowal? (See on ix. 16) Yes. Apollos might quite lawfully employ his special talents. There is no cast of mind, no one mould of man, from which God has not raised up successful *witnesses* of His truth; no faculty, no knowledge, on which contribution cannot be levied for the service of Christ. There is an "*excellency*" of popular address which is the very equipment of an out-of-doors evangelist. There is an eloquence *born*, and inevitable as certainly as the man opens his lips. But there is an eloquence which is taught and acquired and laboured after, the mere artificial rhetoric of the schools and their fashions of oratory, which, in Paul's view, is no thing for the minister of Christ to seek after or employ. In any case the faculty of attractive, persuasive speech must be kept a means to an end, never a thing desirable, an end in itself. Where it is a native, necessary, inborn, unconscious eloquence and *excellence*, it must rigidly be kept consecrated to the service and glory of Christ alone. But the speaker will find it hard not to create a difficulty for his own heart, and not to arrest the attention and heart of his hearers at himself. Any art associated

with the delivery of the message may assume undue importance. If it succeed, it may get the credit due only to the "*power of God.*" Probably Paul would not censure his friend Apollos, who, eloquent and philosophical as he perhaps was, might nevertheless [or therefore?] do good, and who certainly would, if his aim and heart were kept right. Yet he plainly believed that his own mere "*testimony,*" in simpler language, would do greater good, and that it ran less risk of obscuring in any degree the glory of the "*power of God.*" The anxiety to justify the Gospel to the intellect of the unrenewed man, or to cast it in some such mould as would be less likely to be repellent at its first hearing, would *to him* be a putting on of the hampering armour of Saul, instead of relying upon the sling, and stone—*and* **God**! It might even issue in so modifying some essential feature of the Gospel that it should no longer be simply God's "*testimony.*" The intellect of the world had, in Greece above all, been fed upon the noblest philosophies, and was sick of them all, and unsatisfied. Teacher after teacher was more critical of his predecessors, than constructive of anything satisfying. Should Paul attempt to give the weary world another philosophy? No! He would tell them a history, and the heart of the history should be a Person—"Jesus Christ," and that Jesus Christ "crucified." The "princes of this world" knew everything but this. Paul knew nothing but this; but such a man, with such a message, working on such a method, succeeded.

## *SEPARATE HOMILIES.*

Ver. 2. *Paul's One Topic.*—[Cf. this resolution of Paul *the preacher*, with the resolution and life-habit of Paul the *sinner*, "*This one thing* (I do). . . . I *counted all* . . . loss. Yea, I *count* all . . . loss" (Phil. iii. 13, 7, 8).] ["The man of one book" is a proverb of narrowness of knowledge and of view. "Fiddling ever upon one string" is usually a reproach to any public speaker. But a Paul could outmatch a Paganini in educing from his "one string" an endless variety of soul-winning music. Rather, Paul's one string will give endless variety to the preaching of a man of far less ability than Paul. The theme, not the player, is inexhaustible.]

I. **Christ Jesus, not Paul** (cf. 2 Cor. iv. 5). In the analogous case of Galatia, the rival teachers really at bottom only cared to boast how many converts they could make to their Judaising form of the Gospel (Gal. vi. 13). Really a subtle glorification of themselves and their ministry; before even the Circumcision, for which they professed such anxiety.

II. **A Person, not a philosophy or a set of doctrines.**—Men's hearts cannot rest in a system. There is rest only in a person. A well-known characteristic of Christianity that Christ identifies His religion with Himself. Faith does not only, or chiefly, lay hold of a series of propositions about Him, whether historical or theological, but of Himself. "If I say Christianity, I thereby say Jesus Christ. Christianity appeared in the world, not as a system of philosophy, not as a code of morality, but as an actual fact, the fact of the person Christ Jesus. All depends on Him. With Him, Christianity stands or falls. It cannot be separated from Him. It was not His precepts, but His person and His testimony concerning Himself, which brought about the crisis in Israel. He Himself made His whole cause depend upon His person. We cannot separate it from Him. Rationalism has attempted to separate Christianity from Christ, and to reduce it to a mere morality. But experience has proved the attempt impossible. Jesus Christ does not bear the same relation to Christianity as Mahomet does to Mahometanism, or as any other founder of a religion to the religion he has founded; but He is Himself Christianity. To speak of Christianity,

is to speak, not of doctrines and precepts, but of Jesus Christ. Christianity is indeed a summary of truths, a new doctrine, a philosophy if you will, a new view of the world, a new explanation of history, a new mode of worship, a new morality, a new rule of life, etc. It is all these, because it is a fact universal in its nature. But all these depend upon the person of Jesus Christ, are given with Him, and included in Him—stand and fall with Him" (Luthardt, *Fundamental Truths*, lect. viii. 256). Part of its universal adaptation, this. The child, the ignorant, the heathen, at once are led to the very heart of Christianity when they are taught to know Him. They believe in Him, they learn to love Him, life is summarised and simplified into living for Him. They can die for Him. They say as Paul did, "To me to live is Christ." So the little child can be a Christian. The heathen, whether in lands nominally Christian or really heathen, simply, readily learn the secret of becoming saints.

III. "Not to know anything save," etc. **What was the alternative in Paul's mind? What was the alternative in the practice of the rival teachers at Corinth?**—If we are to find any suggestion in the use of the name "*Cephas*," and with that may couple what we gather from the Galatian Epistle about Peter's connection with the Judaising controversy which just at this period evidently occupied so much of Paul's life and thoughts, our answer may be "**Circumcision.**" In contrast with some other teachers at Corinth, Paul made his topic "**Jesus Christ, not circumcision.**" In Acts xv. 1 is summarised the *thesis*, so to speak, which the side of the Christian community whose associations and affinities were with the Judaism from which they had been recruited, nailed up on the door of the Antiochian Church, and which became for many years the centre of fierce strife within the new brotherhood: "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." Paul saw from the first that this proposition struck direct at the honour of his Divine Master. What was to save a man? Was not Jesus Christ a sufficient Saviour? What did they propose—"Christ *and* Circumcision"? Or was it "Circumcision *before*, or even *instead* of, Christ"? Either way he would "*know nothing*" of the kind. Should he preach some necessary supplement to the work of his crucified Master, without which what He did was not complete and sure foundation for a sinner's hope? "God forbid" (Gal. vi. 14). Could it be that they even meant Christ to be the supplement to the efficacy of the now mere dead ceremonial? "God forbid!" Could it be that, not Christ at all, but the ceremonial was to save? Yet the ceremonial was now *effete*, evacuated of all meaning or virtue; it had, indeed, become a mere "concision" (Phil. iii. 2), a mere piece of surgery, a mere cutting of the flesh. Whatever these later comers might do, or teach, when he entered Corinth his own resolve was clear and definite, and to it he had rigorously confined himself: "Jesus Christ . . . crucified."

IV. Moreover, he had from the first been at the uttermost pole **removed from the motives of such teachers, as well as from their teaching** [to borrow light again from the Galatian Epistle, as above: vi. 14]. Their motives were of "the world," not of Christ. The religion of circumcision was becoming almost fashionable in some quarters. The weary heart of many in the upper classes were seeking, some of them a new sensation, some of them real rest, in becoming Jewish proselytes. A few years later a proselyte Jewess, Poppæa, sat by Nero's side on the throne of the empire. But the man who made any profession of "Christ, the crucified" Jew of Nazareth, had to lay his account with social exclusion, and to have for his friends for the most part the artisan, the slave, certainly "not many noble, mighty," etc. It was human nature; therefore it was the spirit of "the world" getting a footing in Christian hearts again, when some

of these were putting to the front the side of Christianity on which it had relations with the Old Religion, with its *prestige* of a sort, and were keeping in the background the Cross, with all its associations of shame and suffering and social inferiority. The crucifying of Christ had so entered into Paul's life that he himself was "crucified with Him," and a crucifixion was between him and such "worldly" motives in teaching and thought. He was crucified to the world, and was quite content that it should care no more about him than it did for a poor fellow hanging dead upon a cross. The world was crucified to him; he cared no more for its good opinion or its bad opinion, for its favour or its frown, than did the dying man for the passing show beneath him, on which his glazing eyes looked down from the elevation of his cross. "I am nothing to the world; the world is nothing to me. In any personal life I know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." "Weakness and folly be it! A weak fool I was prepared to be reckoned, when I came to you wise and mighty people in Corinth." All which has its present-day analogies for the man who is determined, in the world—not to say also in the Church—to know, to have but the **one theme, sovereign** in all his theology, his ethics, his teaching, his service—"Jesus Christ crucified."

Ver. 4. *The Demonstration of the Spirit.*—A pivot-word of the chapter; a pivot-fact in the story of the Gospel.

I. **The secret of Paul's success at Corinth.**—1. Consider the conditions under which Paul sought to win Corinth for Christ. Morally, a city of the vilest. A seaport, with all the difficulties of a shifting population, of medley composition, given eagerly to the pursuit of wealth. Sufficiently a Greek city for the Corinthian to pique himself upon his intellectual acuteness. And a large Jewish community—as everywhere, proud, narrow, intolerant. See Paul enter Corinth, an unnoticed man amongst the throng; of no striking appearance, in poor health; one Jew more, where there were too many already; a working tentmaker, taking lodgings with a Pontian Jew and his wife, fugitives from Rome. He is alone; his host and hostess are not Christians yet. He begins his attack on Corinth singlehanded. Moreover, he has "handicapped" himself by a resolution that he will concede nothing to the intellectualism of the city or the fashion of rhetorical address. He has a "ridiculous" topic—a crucified Jew, who, forsooth, has risen from the grave, and gone to heaven; and he will conciliate no opposition, he will bid for no success, by any economy or reserve as to the matter of his teaching, or by any artifice of human school-rhetoric in its presentation. Succeed or fail—**he will not!** He **succeeded!** After a stay of a year and a half, he left behind him a Church in Corinth. Poor specimens of Christians; but remember their training, their surroundings, and that the most elementary Christianity was a whole heaven removed from much of the most ordinary heathen, not to say Jewish, life. Jews had bowed before a Crucified Messiah. Gentiles had trusted in a Son of God who was a man, and unlearned. **What did it?** 2. What did it at Thessalonica two years before? (1 Thess. ii. 1, i. 4). The Holy Ghost did it. Greek intellectualism and sensuality and Jewish pride, bowed before the **Demonstration of the Spirit. His peculiar, proper proof wrought Conviction.** 3. So anywhere, amongst all classes; amongst nominal Christians or real heathens. Remember that Paul often tried his form of the Gospel upon simple, virgin, adult heathenism. The problems of our mission-fields were his problems. The mission-fields of the Churches have a high value in the very fact that they repeatedly afford new examples and verifications of the method: "The demonstration of the Spirit." A "consecrated cobbler" tried it in India, as a "consecrated tentmaker" tried it in Corinth. It seems irrational, and even impertinent, that a stranger should

make his appearance amongst a heathen people, bringing with him a book, and that much of his method should be a number of bold, bare assertions. Their gods false—no gods at all; his the only True. Their religions—whether childish in their barbarous simplicity, or hoary with antiquity, the fruit of ages of subtle thought—all fraud or delusion; the True is an elaborate and mysterious system of teachings, gathering around a Person mentioned in his Book. It is with very real peril, he says, that they reject this Person. Some of the commonest practices of themselves and their ancestors—sins, which make his God angry. And so on; a series of startling assertions. The world laughs or grows angry at the man and the method, but the man succeeds. Something awakens within his hearers; Some One works with him within their hearts. They accept his teaching; many become really "saints." Nothing more illogical, coolly, irritatingly presumptuous, than his procedure; yet heart, will, understanding bow, and the men are "new creatures." The "*demonstration of the Spirit*" makes it successful. Because

II. **The Spirit (1) reveals a new world, (2) gives a new sense, (3) affords a new kind of evidence.**—(1) Five senses are our outfit for living in the natural world; five gateways of knowledge. Take these away, and all knowledge of the world round us is gone. We can also awaken and train another eyesight, another hearing, for a world of facts for the intellect, growing wider as we train. "Taste" opens up the world of æsthetics. The heart again has its world, that of the affections. Are these all? "Yes," says the natural man; "there is nothing else. We have explored; our world grows larger every day; but we find no new world. Every new inquirer brings in his new gathering of facts into the common stock. Our methods grow more perfect; the observing faculty more highly trained. But we find only this natural world." The Bible agrees with them exactly (1 Cor. ii. 9). The very meaning of Agnostic, Agnosticism. Huxley coined the word thirty years ago. *Spectator* popularised it; made it the chosen name of many of the most famous and most influential men and women of our time. Metaphysicians, theologians, affirm and deny confidently; the Agnostic will neither affirm nor deny, has no scientific ground for professing to know. As a "natural" man, he is right; wiser than the "infidel" of the last century. Did he call himself a Deist? Then Christian controversialists pressed him that he must logically believe much more. The Christian was plainly right. Or was he an Atheist, and denied a God? Christian apologists said: "You cannot demonstrate, do not know, that. To demonstrate that, *you* must be omniscient and omnipresent." He is now seen to have been right again. "Eye hath not seen," etc. (A.V., R.V. not materially different). But finish the quotation: "God hath revealed," etc. The spiritual man says another world has opened around him. He can look back to the day when it first broke in upon his eyesight, when his ears were first opened to its voices and harmonies, when his dead heart started into life, sympathy, receptivity, enjoyment. How was it done?

(2) *The Spirit gave new senses.*—For a deaf man, open an ear! For a blind, an eye! Yet not that only. Put many a man before a beautiful landscape or painting. He sees it, but sees nothing in it. You must open an inner eye. Many men hear sound, but not music. You must give or awaken a faculty. A corpse lies blind, dumb, deaf, without sensation, responsiveness; life all around, but cut off from all. Give life, and you give not one sense, but all, and a new world. ["The Life is the Light of men."] So for the spiritual world, the "things of the Spirit of God" (ver. 14) want a new faculty, corresponding. The "natural man" must be "agnostic" to these; "spiritually discerned." *E.g. Sin.* Spiritual men understand failure because of weakness; the fall of a tottering child

learning to walk; the defect of a finite creature. The "natural" man sees no more. But the spiritual man sees more. *Guilt*; he is himself guilty; feels guilty fear; discovers that he was not only blind, but blinded; helpless, not with weakness, but with disease. A discovery all this, a revelation, when it comes. Think of the burst of a new world on the blind man (John ix.) when he had washed away the clay, and for the first time saw, and understood what sight meant, *and what blindness meant.* A natural man is "agnostic" in regard to himself until that moment; Christ, and spiritual men, have understood him all the while. That blind man said, "You know not . . . He hath opened my eyes!" To every man thus made to understand the fact—Sin, Christ has Divine credentials. "Proofs" of His Divinity have their place; the natural man may discuss them, but the spiritual man *knows.* The Spirit brings the sinner, Thomas-like, into the presence of Christ. Doubts melt away. Questions to be asked, tests to be proposed, difficulties often raised—all are forgotten. He looks, falls, adores: "My Lord, and my God." Only the new sense will do this. Without that men will go on "*crucifying the Lord of glory.*" Sin and a Divine Saviour are two facts by which to mark out a spiritual world; twin stars in the firmament of truth—"tests of sight" for spiritual things.

(3) This brings thus a *new kind of evidence.*—He who says, "One thing I know," etc. (John ix. 25), knows much besides. One man with opened eyes is secure against the arguments of a thousand blind. A spiritual man is safe, walking in light, and knows it. The natural man is in darkness and danger, but only the spiritual man knows it. He understands the natural man; the natural does not know, nor can criticise, the spiritual (ver. 15). ["Pure in *heart* see God."] Value of all this to-day, amidst revolutionary changes in knowledge and the very foundation principles of knowledge and inquiry. Very few capable of mastering the evidence for or against all these changes; most must believe, or *disbelieve*, upon authority. Children, heathen, cannot by discussion or investigation arrive at knowledge on such matters. Yet there is a world which they know, where they are at home; they tread confidently; they give a lifetime to the study of such of its facts as sin, pardon, providence, prayer, an inspired Bible, a Divine Christ. **These things they know by "the demonstration of the Spirit."** Natural systems of things must find room for these spiritual facts, or they give no true, complete account of man, life, the world. (Cf. 1 John v. 18-20.)

["He knows nothing," they say, when they have heard the new minister. "He is a poor, narrow fellow!" "He is no preacher!" But sometimes the narrowness gives force. In that may be his power. Narrowness may be to shut up the force of your powder in a gun-barrel, rather than to let it simply burn away uselessly in space and "freedom"; to load with a bullet instead of with a pellet of lead-foil.]

Ver. 6. *Wisdom justified amongst the Perfect.*

I. **Facts, such as "the perfect" appreciate, set up a presumption that it is wisdom.**—The world says: "A poor thing, this Gospel of yours! Your preachers boast that they have only One Topic, only one theme, only one tune, in their repertory. Fit for the maid-servants, for children, and for fools!" [Voltaire's well-known sneer, "Philosophy was never meant for the people. The *canaille* of to-day resembles in everything the *canaille* of the last four thousand years. We have never cared to enlighten cobblers and maid-servants. That is the work of apostles."] Certainly "the poor have the Gospel preached to them"! That is its glory. It is the *climax* of the series of Messiah-tokens which Christ offered in reply to John Baptist's question (Matt. xi. 4). It can hardly be an entirely "*foolish*" system of truth which has repeatedly approved

itself as a very effectual "Culture for the Million." Culture as ordinarily understood is to the vast majority not available at all. They have no preparation for it; their average powers, the engrossing, enslaving, nature of their necessary engagements in providing for the wants of the physical life, the surroundings in the midst of which the majority of mankind must always live, forbid that it should have any message and help for them. Is that the *wiser* instrument for developing the best in mankind, which avowedly, and in the nature of the case, must miss the bulk of mankind altogether; or that which, true or false, has given a very real enlargement of life and outlook and ideas and character to the labouring class in all lands and ages, to the young, to the heathen, to the sunken and degraded and hopeless, to even the profligate and debased? In English agricultural districts, for example, how frequently is there found an old labourer, hard-handed, of heavy gait, bowed in knee and shoulder, of scanty education, with no literature but a Bible, and a devout book or two beside, living in narrow circumstances, and yet refined in thought by long years of habitual pondering over such large conceptions as the love of God and of His Son toward him; his mind really enlarged by the habitual extension of the horizon of Life until it takes in the Eternal and the Unseen; the man perpetually dwelling in the presence of "Him who is invisible" [Heb. xi. 27. No man's life can be narrow, or mean, or animal, who does that! If we only knew that one fact about Moses, we should be sure that he had learned the secret of living a life, large and elevated and noble. We see how "the Invisible" was an anchor which held him to the right, when otherwise the storm of fear might have swept him away before it into a return to Egypt and an abandonment of his mission.] Indeed, the spirit of "Christ Crucified" has so far moulded many such a labourer's spirit into conformity with the Pattern that, in unselfish readiness to serve others, in fine sensibility to the feelings of others, in a real tact and consideration for others, the "clod-hopper," as some would call him, has become, in all the essentials of the character, a "gentleman." He has learned it from the Bible, whose heart and *raison d'être* is Christ—Paul's "Christ crucified." The system which can do this, in those very ranks of social life, of which philosophers or Jewish Rabbis (John vii. 49, "Ham-ha-aretz") despaired, or took no practical account, is not to be dismissed as folly. "*Perfect*" men justify the "*wisdom*."

II. **Paul found, and the "perfect" find, how perfectly this system meets the need of actual human nature.**—"Wisdom" or "folly" is often a question of suiting means to ends. The means may be ludicrously inadequate or the end entirely unworthy. Here the end is noble, and the means are of proved sufficiency. For the many-sided need of human nature the "manifold" — many-sided, many-coloured—"wisdom of God" (Eph. iii. 10) has provided the "manifold" (cognate word, 1 Pet. iv. 10) "grace of God." Like the flaming sword of the gate of Eden, it "turns every way"; but offering a very different reception to the approach of needy human nature, drawing it near, not keeping it off. No matter from what side human need approaches it, the grace of God revealed in the Gospel of "*Jesus Christ . . . crucified*" has an aspect exactly, "squarely," meeting it. It reveals first of all that Sin is the root trouble of humanity, and it then offers its remedy for Sin in its threefold curse of Guilty Fear, of Innate Impurity, and of Fear of Death. [Thus, especially in the last particular, does it "destroy . . . the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations" (Isa. xxv. 7; which proceeds:) "He will swallow up death in victory."] Coming as a Jew into a city where much of his work would be concerned with a numerous Jewish element in the population,

Paul appreciated the "wisdom and the power of God" in the message of the Cross. He knew—none better—the utmost of moral help which could come from the system whose seal and symbol was Circumcision. It "could never make the comers thereunto perfect" (Heb. x. 1); it could not bring them to spiritual and moral manhood. [It was only a "school-slave," a pedagogue, for children under age (Gal. iii. 24).] It could not, even with its culminating sacrifice on the Day of Atonement, give a lasting, perfect peace to a guilty conscience (Heb. x. 2). It spoke sternly of duty, but of itself law offers no help to obedience; that is not its office. And, indeed, the provision for pardon through the elaborate system of sacrifice scarcely reached beyond transgressions of the ritual system. For graver moral delinquencies and offences it had hardly a word of help or hope. Paul's Epistles are full of a larger, satisfying help, all centering in the work of the Cross. He had himself "found sanctuary" there. The very writ of God's own righteous law does not "run" within the precincts of the Cross. The sinner taking refuge there says, "No condemnation!" [A passing analogy may be found in the trial of Marcus Manlius, the hero of old Roman history, whose glory it was to have saved the Capitol from the Gauls. Becoming the friend of the distressed plebeian classes, the patricians accused him of aiming at "the tyranny," and put him on trial before the Comitia in the Campus Martius. But there in full view was the Capitol, and he pointed to it as his only defence. After such an appeal his condemnation was impossible, and his prosecutors broke up the assembly. He was again tried, and in the end put to death; but the second trial took place in the Peteline Grove, *where the Capitol could not be seen.* "No condemnation" where the Capitol—or the Cross—can be seen and appealed to.] Nor does the work of the Crucified Saviour end with the relief to a guilty conscience, from all fear of past sin and its penalty. The divided heart, the consequent moral weakness, which are the shame and the despair of all noble natures—hating themselves that they do not, and cannot, attain to even their own ideal of Goodness or Holiness—these find their remedy in the "salvation to the uttermost" which is made available in the work of Christ crucified. Rom. vi. or Gal. ii. 15-21 are samples of the message Paul could take to Corinth, the good news of God's "*wise*" remedy for heart-sin. The crucifixion of his Lord was to Paul no mere fact of the past, however significant in its objective relief to a guilty soul. It was a transaction re-enacted—or which had its counterpart—within the soul of every believer in Christ. "Christ died to sin once;" "death" from that moment "had no more dominion over Him"; "He" there "spoiled principalities and powers";—all these significancies in the fact of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, Paul knew were to be realised over again in the man whom a living and life-bringing faith united to Christ. As a matter of fact, ten thousands of all ranks, ages, countries, churches, "crucified with Christ," have found in the Cross and its power, effectuated by the Spirit of God, the solution of the problem of a Holy Life. And the death of Christ has transformed all the habitual thought and feeling of the Christian world in regard to death. [Illustrate by the triumph with which the main body of an attacking force sees the advance party raise the flag upon the captured battery. So when the centurion and his quaternion of men, "told off for duty" at "the execution" upon Calvary, raised up and dropped into the hole they had dug for it, the cross of rough carpentry with its precious Burden, they "knew not indeed what they did," but they were really raising the banner of a world's victory over that Death in which the curse of sin had entrenched itself in its most terrifying form.] Death has never been the same thing since He died, at least to His people. They

who else "were all their lifetime subject to bondage" through "the fear of death" (Heb. ii. 15), now welcome it as advancing their hopes, and their best purposes, and their spiritual growth, a stage onward toward realisation. Many of His people, even tender women and young children, have met death with far less of dread and distress than He Himself seemed to manifest. He met it in its full strength; to them it comes as a conquered thing, a foe whose "sting" is drawn. The Gospel which thus—as is proved by multiplied experiment—provides a practically operative remedy for the torturing of guilt, for the hopeless moral division and weakness within the nature, and for deliverance from the fear of death, is certainly a "*wisdom*" which approves itself to the "*perfect*" who are experiencing its advantages.

III. **The simplicity of the methods of the Gospel is a mark of its wisdom.** —All adaptations of means to ends, *e.g.* mechanical inventions, gain by simplicity. The inventor who can at the outset, or by subsequent improvements, reduce the number of the parts of the mechanism, or who can simplify their arrangement and working, shows "wisdom." In the plan of moral recovery and renewal, God's wisdom appears in the fewness and simplicity of the essential parts of His scheme. For example, He has "utilised" what Chalmers called "The Expulsive Power of a New Affection" to work a moral revolution in the nature of every Christian man. The principle is one of common and obvious effectiveness; its working is on the lines of the ordinary laws of human nature. It is most strictly analogous to many often verified facts of every-day life. The one "supernatural" element in the case is the Holy Spirit's assurance to the penitent sinner that he has found acceptance with God for Christ's sake, and he now stands in the favour of God. Because he is now a son, accepted, accounted, welcomed, as such, God "sends forth the Spirit of [His] Son into His heart, crying 'Abba, Father'" (Gal. iv. 6). The "love of God"—*God's* forgiving, adopting *love to him* the sinner—"is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him" (Rom. v. 5). All these are varied forms of statement of one fact, that the Spirit of God, by a particular instance of His "demonstration" (ii. 4), that special, direct, supernatural evidence and conviction, which He alone can give, bears in upon the soul, with full clearness and with overwhelming force of assured knowledge, the new idea, the new fact: "**God in Christ loves, forgives, accepts, adopts, me, the sinner!**" How this is communicated, where the Holy Spirit meets man's mind and heart, is past our analysis. [How does man's mind meet and act upon man's mind?] But the fact is sure to the man who receives it upon the Spirit's "testimony" (Rom. viii. 16). And after that first, supernatural step, all proceeds in accordance with the ordinary laws of human thought and life. "We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John iv. 19) is a simple sequence which finds as many illustrations as we find hearts capable of knowing and returning love. And the elevating, transforming force of a new love thus awakened is a fact of every-day observation and knowledge. [The indolent, selfish, and withal weak, nature finds in the loving interest of some friend, a new motive and a new power to arouse itself and to go out of self, and to struggle after and up to a nobler, larger life and character. Poor drunkards, men or women, are thus lifted out of the slough in which they sink helpless and hopeless, by the persistent love of some pitying heart that will not be shaken off, and will not give them up, spite of repeated and ungrateful failures. The young fellow turns away from evil companionship, gives up some evil resort or indulgence, sets himself resolutely to struggle against long-established habits of evil, all because, "She will not like it; she loves me, if nobody else does, and wants me better and

purer." Every mother knows how she can direct and mould her child's life, if only she have her child's love.] "I live," exclaims Paul, "by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me." That fact, "The Son of God loves me, me, me, Paul," grasped by *faith*, and made *knowledge* by the "demonstration of the Spirit," explains, summarises, Paul's new, altered life and career. A new "ruling passion" has taken possession of him, and the transforming, revolutionary, power of a new passion for good or for evil is an ordinary fact of human nature. So a "new idea" taking possession of a life may transform it in character and direction. [The story once told of Correggio may not be true in fact, but it is true to human nature, how that he was a dull, heavy youth, developing no special ability, until one day he found himself before a painting by an earlier artist, which awoke the painter in him, and he turned away saying, "And I too am a painter."] In all God's works there is a "law of parsimony"—parsimony of the miraculous, of "contrivance," of "effort." It was an old argument for the Copernican as against the Ptolemaic arrangement of the solar system, that it was more agreeable to the analogy of God's whole procedure that the earth should go round the sun rather than that the sun should go round the earth; it meant a "less expenditure of force." The argument is worth little to-day, and is not needed; but it rightly appreciated a point of God's *wise* ordering of Nature. And so the simplicity of the means used under the Gospel is a mark of the "*wisdom*" of that Gospel which seems folly to those outside the number of those who believe its truths and experience its blessings. A new affection, a new idea, a new ruling passion, is implanted—"God loves me"; and from this, with its sequel, "I love Him because," etc., grow all the new direction, the new aspirations, the new sympathy with God's love of holiness, all the new activities of the Christian life; a new character, a new man. Love to God is the simple seed from which may spring all holiness. It is the single force which secures such complex and far-reaching results. The whole of Religion is implicitly in the sentence, "We love Him because He first loved us." So again, remembering the constituency to which it is to be applicable, the "perfect" see the wisdom of the form given to the Ethical Standard of the Gospel; **not** an elaborated Code, but a Person, conformity to Whom in character and act and motive is a "law," a rule, applicable to every conceivable case, and apprehensible, as experiment shows, by the simplest mind, and yet a perfect directory for life and practice and character, for the wisest.

Vers. 12-14. *The Causes of Ignorance; the Way to Knowledge.*

I. **The causes of ignorance.**—1. There is, amongst all the fields of human inquiry and their contents, one special field—"*the things of the Spirit of God.*" It stands apart from the rest; the knowledge of it, and the way to that knowledge, stand apart from all other knowledge. Not that there are no analogies with the processes and conditions of knowledge in other fields. It would be unlike God's method in everything else, if this particular group of facts, and this particular path into the knowledge of them, were without their natural analogies—were abnormal in that universal order which includes the spiritual as well as the natural. There are "laws" which hold good in the "natural" and the "spiritual" world, both. The respective classes of facts are analogous; the laws observed to hold good amongst them are identical, can be stated in identical terms. Life, for example, in the natural world is so far analogous to life in the spiritual, that of both it can be said, "No life originates except from life precedent." Similarly the broad principle is found to be as true of spiritual things as of natural: "No knowledge in either world is possible to a man who does not belong to that

world." The old illustrations, always valid, are the blind man's necessary ignorance of the world of light and its facts; the necessary incapacity of the man born deaf for the very idea of sound or music; the utter ignorance of art, the entire incapacity for appreciation or criticism of everything æsthetic, inevitable in the case of the man with no sympathy with, no love for, Art. 2. The "*natural*" man is, in close analogy with all this, a mere outsider in regard to the world of "*the things of the Spirit of God.*" And there is no true knowledge except to those within. Significantly enough, the phrase of Christ to Nicodemus changes from "*see* the kingdom of God" to "*enter* into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3, 5). The barrier wall engirdling the world of things spiritual is too high and too utterly impenetrable for one who does not "enter" to "see" anything. The Great Revealer "who came down from heaven" (John iii. 13), who came from within the wall to tell of glorious things within, and that company of His people whom He joins to Himself as He says, "We speak that we do know, . . . and ye receive not our witness,"—these may tell of what is within, but it conveys little or no knowledge, little or no idea, to those without. "Ye receive not our witness." Every religious teacher, every Christian man or woman who has tried to win to religion those who are outside "the wall," has been baffled with the initial difficulty of conveying any conception of (say) the joys and experiences and knowledge of the life of those who have entered into the kingdom. They speak of an unknown world in an unknown tongue. What they want to tell does not need explaining to those who experience it, and cannot be explained to those who do not. Conversion at once puts a man into possession of the key to knowledge. How frequent the experience of the new convert: "I seemed never to have understood the Bible until now. Sermons seemed suddenly plain to me and interesting now." "I was blind; now I see!" In Bishop Hannington's Life his biographer tells how he called with Hannington at Datley House, Derby, and found with Miss Evans, whose residence it was, several friends seated round the fire, engaged in a conversation which soon turned on some point of religious experience. As Hannington and his friend left the house, the former said, "'Do you know, old fellow, that I think I must really be a Christian!' 'I hope so; but what makes you think so just now especially?' 'Well, what an unutterable bore I should have thought these people and their talk on such a subject a short time ago. But, do you know, I positively enjoyed it'" (Life, p. 102). 3. It is merely reversing the illustration, without affecting the essential fact, to say that the barrier is not around the spiritual world so much as in the man himself. [As in 2 Cor. iii. 12, 15, the veil is first upon the Law, and next upon the heart of the reader.] The kingdom of God is to be entered by the man, but also the kingdom of God enters into the man. He "receives the kingdom of God" (Mark x. 15), which is in close conformity to the phrase here (ver. 14), "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." His five senses and his intelligence are avenues through which the world of things natural enters into the man; through them he receives it. He has a "spirit" which has its *adits* of knowledge, but they are sealed up—sealed up in death. Life only can understand life. It "*is* life eternal to know," etc. (John xvii. 3). The knowledge presupposes life, it evidences it, it alone makes living "life indeed" (1 Tim. vi. 19). The spiritual man knows spiritual things, not only because he has found access into the world of things spiritual, and habitually lives and moves amongst them, the constant environment of his life; but they have entered into him, they have translated themselves into facts which are part of his very self; he knows them simply and directly, as he knows himself. The natural man's incapacity lies in the

fact that he does not open the avenues of his heart to the entrance of this spiritual world. 4. "Does not open," for, after all, the practically operative incapacity and ignorance are in large part of his own creating. Two things must be carefully kept apart in our thought about human nature. It is fallen; it is redeemed. The fall must never be, in point of fact and experience *can* never be, dealt with apart from the redemption. The natural, native incapacity for spiritual things, the absolute incapacity of "death," is true only of a Manhood which is a necessarily theological conception, but no more. No man is actually found who, to begin with, has an utter and absolute ignorance or incapacity for knowledge. The grace of the redemption of the race by its Second Adam has so far modified the actual condition that there is very much of light in many, some in all. But this may be quenched, the knowledge may be lost. The eyes which were at least in part opened may be closed again. By plain sin, indulged in any form, by even utter worldliness, many a man has been led back to, has reverted to, what must have been, and ideally is, the utter darkness and death of the natural heart, with its insusceptibility and its sealed *adits* of knowledge. [The prodigal has "spent all."] He has flung away the beginnings of light and knowledge and capacity. Natural conditions would account for the innate and necessary incapacity; but when that has been in some degree removed, then moral causes lie at the basis of much of the actual ignorance. [In so far, a man *can* "help not believing."] There may in some be a moral levity which refuses to give any serious attention to themes which demand it, or will not else yield up their secret. There may be more of conceit, pride, in the position of some doubters or ignorant ones, of the man who knows nothing of spiritual things, than they are themselves aware of. It seems "nobler" to be somewhat independent, and not quite content to follow in the old line, or to accept anything on trust. There is a pride that will not allow a man to recede from a position he has once openly taken up, and, above all, that will not allow him to do or say anything which confesses or implies that he has been all along a sinner, and morally wrong. This may be cherished until it becomes resolute not to be satisfied and to believe; "no evidence will ever satisfy me." And subtle in the extreme is the temper which makes the man turn away, half unconsciously, from fully and fairly looking at truths which he knows, if accepted, must revolutionise his life. He does not want to go in their direction, and he averts his gaze; he will not look that way. The "*spirit of the world*" has been "*received*," and allowed to enter into occupation and control. So long as this is in any degree his attitude, the "*natural man cannot know the things of the Spirit of God.*" He will not receive them. The little children have little or none of this pride or subtlety of heart; they readily enter into the kingdom. To "receive the kingdom as a little child" is the only way of knowledge for the man.

II. **The way to knowledge.**—1. Before, however, the man can receive the things of the Spirit, there must be an earlier step taken. He must "*receive the Spirit which is of God*," and then he can "*receive the things of the Spirit of God.*" The Spirit is the first gift; then He enables the man to receive and know all else so freely "*given to us of God.*" The gifts will only be received by a receiver brought into sympathy and receptiveness. "Spirituals to spiritual." All faculty for knowing and receiving is grace; it is a gift. The Spirit gives Himself; men who get to know have first received Him. He, too, stands at the door and knocks, "May I come in?" He breathes around, His light shines upon us. Men must open the shutters and throw wide doors and windows to the rushing mighty Wind, that He may fill the house of the heart. "But I cannot open!" "Yes, you can open! He is

Himself with you to help you to open, and to receive Him. [Or at least you are not weaker than the bed-ridden invalid, who cannot rise to open in answer to the knock of the Visitor, but can at least lie and say 'Come in.'" He is in that word "Come in"; this Visitant will, *if the man will*, open the door for Himself and enter. The "receiving" is in the will; and the very will itself is not without something of His grace.] It is helpful to realise that men are dealing with no mere vague Abstraction, or a half-poetical, idealised Energy or Force, but with a Personal Friend and Teacher. It is a Comforter who "leads into all truth." He is One who can be a Revealer because He has an original knowledge of the things of God *ab intra*, so to speak; He knows them, because He knows God as it were from within the very self of God. To give Him welcome is then the first step to knowledge. The native incapacity is gone if He is come in. The susceptibility is restored if He dwell within. The eyes, the ears, all the senses of the human "*spirit*," are awakened from their death into receptiveness and activity.

2. He will communicate much knowledge directly. Man must make his mind touch the mind of another man through a chain of physical organs and their operations, but the Spirit can go direct to the spirit in man, in immediate communication. But He will also use means—words spoken, words written, by men who are taught them, not by man's wisdom, but by Himself. Paul and his brethren stand apart in their gift. The Spirit used them to make known to the Church "*the things which are freely given*," the "heritage of those who fear God's name," as first-hand authorities to convey new truth. Things such as these had never "*entered into the heart of men*." To these very apostles these were novelties. He conveys no new truth to-day in the sense of adding anything absolutely new to the completed body of revealed disclosures; he expounds the old truth already given. But this with a wonderful novelty. The inheritance has long ago in its completeness been made over in its entirety; He leads the heir over his estate, and continually discovers in it for him new beauties, new wealth, new views, "the length, and breadth, and depth, and height." The Word is His great instrument of disclosure. Let a man use it, read it, explore it, with the Spirit of God "received" to be His Guide, and it is marvellous how some simple souls grow fast in the knowledge and in the experience of the things "*given to us of God*." Many simple hearts make good theologians; no man can be an expert in Divine things who is not spiritual, Spirit-taught. Bishop Andrews said that he learnt far more upon his knees than from his books.

3. He is the one and only Teacher of the first and fundamental truth of all religion, Sin and the need of a Saviour, of help from outside a man's self. Until that is learned the very A B C of Divine things is unknown, and all after-teaching is simply incomprehensible. But He comes; reaching hearts inaccessible to human appeal, and that will even tolerate no human approach; hearts fenced round with conventionalisms and pride, hard as if in the grip of a hard, frost-bound winter of worldly life. He comes and overleaps all barriers and gets at the inmost citadel direct; He throws down all the defences of pride, all lifelong sophistries with which the soul has deluded itself; tears away all the veils so long and diligently and densely woven which have hidden the real man from even himself. The proud, reserved, self-satisfied soul carries about with it a new conviction, driven home, burnt in, "I am a sinner!"; carries it until it can keep silence no longer, "the bones wax old through the inward roaring all the day long"; and at last shame, fear, pride, are all overborne by the masterful might of the new truth, "I am a sinner!" So too He bears in, burns in, with happy force of conviction the truth, "I am a child of God,

and not a servant any longer" (Rom. viii. 15, 16). In the fulness of the new discovery he utters, by a new instinct, and for the first time, a child's name for God, "Abba, Abba!" God Himself "*is given*" to him as he never knew or expected was possible before. In like manner point after point of the experiences of the Christian life, its possibilities, its privileges, reveal themselves to the spiritual man, and all of them "*freely given*," to be "*received*," therefore, into the embrace of the quickened understanding, but above all into the inmost life of the heart. Strictly speaking there is to the spiritual man no merely "doctrinal" truth, as distinguished from "experimental." The theology of his creed is merely the formal, scientific statement of truths that are his life. But if the conventional and convenient distinction is to be maintained, then again is the Spirit the Guide into all truth. There is discovered an orderly, harmonious scheme of doctrine, every point of which has its relations with every other. As between Church and Church, man and man, the parts, the points, may receive different degrees of appreciation, and so may be taught with varying prominence and emphasis. But spiritual men understand each other, and understand the wisdom of God, which is to the natural mind a hidden thing, a "mystery," a secret which they have no ear to receive, even if it were spoke to them. The man whose Teacher is the Spirit of God understands. As the solar system was a problem of growing perplexity to the astronomers of the past, who adopted earth as their centre, but resolved itself and its motions and laws into perfect harmony and order when a heliocentric standpoint was adopted; so the Spirit of God puts even the least cultured or trained spiritual men at the *theo*centric, *Christo*centric, view point; and if all perplexity and difficulty do not pass away, at least he occupies the only standpoint from which knowledge is possible, and the beauty and order and harmony of Christian Truth can be in any degree understood and received.

## *HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.*

Ver. 16. *The Mind of Christ.*—1. As explained in the Critical Notes, nothing said here of the "character" or "distinguishing spirit" of Christ. It is true that in that sense "*we* have," as the natural man has not, the mind of Christ, in varying degree of apprehension of it, in varying clearness of exhibition of it. The Christian is *normally* a reproduction, a repetition, of Christ, in tempers, conduct, judgments, holiness But obviously what is meant is the "mind" which can be made a matter of information and instruction, the thought of God, and of His Christ, about and towards His people. 2. Very noteworthy the interchange between "Lord" and "Christ." [True there are variant readings, but not so strongly attested in any case as to disturb the Received Text.] Comparably with the position ascribed to the Spirit in vers. 10, 11, as it were, internal to God, with a relation which may be paralleled with that of the human spirit to the man; so here Christ occupies such a position in Paul's theology [the Holy Ghost's theology, they say who believe in Paul's inspiration] as that His name may be quietly substituted for the "**Jehovah**" of the Old Testament prophet. The particular case is but a sample of others in which an Old Testament text is so transfigured, that, whilst the verbal body remains the same, another soul, another personality has entered into it, and we see not Jehovah, but Jesus the Christ, looking through its eyes, speaking through its lips, informing with Himself its whole countenance and aspect. Who must He be whom the vesture of Old Testament Jehovah-phraseology

thus fits so perfectly that it was plainly made for His use? *The new wine of* N.T. *doctrine can be put into the old bottles of* O.T. *language.* 3. Note that Revealed Truth, both in its doctrinal and its experimental aspects (to use the convenient distinction), is the disclosure of the thought, the will, the "mind" of Christ. He is the Fountain of our knowledge on such topics. If He be not, in the economy of the Redemptional Trinity, exactly and accurately the great Fountain-head of it, at least He is the only and only-accessible Fountain to whom the Father has been pleased that men [and perhaps all creaturely life] should come to draw, and "at" whom alone they may obtain any knowledge. [For knowledge, as well as for the good offices which a sinful creature needs One to do for him with a holy God, "no man cometh to the Father"—or gets at the Father, even to know Him—"but by Christ."] Accordingly it is the "word of Christ" which is to "dwell richly" in the Colossians. [Col. iii. 16, again with its variants, "God" and "Lord"; which have this incidental significance for historical theology that they show the belief in the Godhead of Jesus to have been so thoroughly the conviction of the early transcribers (and of the early Church) that they could designedly substitute —if they did so designedly—one phrase for the other with no sense of impropriety, or could inadvertently do so with a perfect and unconscious facility only to be explained by the customary equipollence of the expressions.] "The Spirit of Christ" was in the ancient prophets (1 Pet. i. 11); the Old Testament was but the earlier stage of the utterance of the one abiding "word of the Lord" which is the "Gospel" (1 Pet. i. 25). 4. "*We have*" is more than "*we know* the mind of Christ." *We* is only spoken of the Apostolic company as the culminating embodiment of the general idea of "Christians." [These say, moreover, as they read these Epistles, "We have the mind," not only of Paul, but "of Christ." The more vividly realised natural, literary, historical, personal side of these Epistles is nowaday making it difficult to be just to the old view that, whoever was the writer, the real Author was the Spirit of God; that though the thoughts passed through the mind of men and took a personal, individual stamp from each, yet they were thoughts for which the Spirit of God held Himself responsible.] "*We have;*" they have become part, not only of our habitual beliefs, our stock of *credenda*, but part of our life, of ourselves. We carry within us the law of Christ, we carry within us the Gospel. 5. How this settles many a question, sufficiently at any rate, for practical life, such as the objective efficacy of prayer, providence, and the like. 6. And these topics may, if we will, be studied by us with the Author's own help. We may ask *Him* what He meant by this or that. The Spirit who searches the "*deep things of God*" also knows the "mind of Christ," even its deep things of teaching and saving grace.

## CHAPTER III.

### *CRITICAL NOTES.*

Ver. 1. **And I.**—*Q.d.* "As any other 'spiritual' teacher would have to do." So Ellicott; but perhaps laying undue stress upon the "*and*," which, if more than merely a half-colloquial redundance, may rather be parallel with ii. 1; *q.d.* "Accordingly I," etc., *i.e.* in agreement with the broad lines of necessary procedure laid down in ii. 6-16. **Spiritual.**—In the precise and quasi-technical sense of chap. ii. [or *inter alios*, Gal. vi. 1]. **Carnal.**—We should have expected "natural" (= "psychical, animal-souled"). But this would have denied to them any participation in the grace and awakening and renewal of the Spirit. They are Christians of a low type, but not so low as that. They are "*in Christ*," but only as "*babes*." Note the reading: only appearing in the Received Text in 2 Cor. iii. 3, but now here also and in Rom. vii. 14, Heb. vii. 16. Some deny any distinction between the old form and the new, except of literary rank. Trench would (§ lxxii.) distinguish as between "*fleshly*" (= the displaced reading) and "*fleshy*" or "*fleshen*," parallel to "wooden" (= the new reading, and in 2 Cor. iii. 3); as if distinguishing between men in whom "the flesh" was indeed predominant, but with many gracious checks and restraints, and men in whom the one apparent feature in life was so much the literal "flesh" that they were "not *anti*-spiritual, but *un*-spiritual, . . . flesh and little more, when they might have been much more." Yet he regards the word as conveying a less grave accusation than the ordinary word for "carnal" ("fleshly") does. The varying judgments of the authorities show how slight at best is the distinction.

Ver. 2.—Cf. Heb. v. 11—vi. 4, where note that the doctrine of 1 Cor. xv. is amongst the "*elements*," the "*milk*" for babes. Also Paul "preached the Resurrection" to the merely "*natural*" men of Athens (Acts xvii. 18). Cf. "New wine in old bottles"; "new cloth on old garment." So Christ only spoke plainly to the disciples about His death, when, *e.g.*, Peter's faith in His Godhead had first risen into a bold confession; and then also the announcement, so perplexing to a Jew, and so distressing to a friend like Peter, was followed up by a view of his Master in His true, native glory (Matt. xvi. 20, 21). Cf. "*Neither yet now are ye able*" with "Ye cannot bear them now" (John xvi. 12). Also cf. "earthly things" and "heavenly things" (John iii. 12).

Ver. 3.—Helps to a definition of "*the flesh*"; as does Gal. v. 19, 20, by no means a catalogue of *bodily* sins alone. See life in the flesh plainly differentiated from life in the material body (Rom. viii. 9), "Ye are not in the flesh." Note the changes of translation in R.V. **After the manner of men.**—So in xv. 32. But the special colouring of the phrase, whether neutral or condemnatory, varies from instance to instance of its use.

Ver. 4.—Less complete enumeration than in i. 12. Perhaps for the reason explained in iv. 6. Also he and Apollos were more closely connected than any others with the origin and growth of the Corinthian Church.

Ver. 5.—Better reading "*what?*" not "*who?*" Also "*through*." Not, "As the Lord gave *to every man of you* the type of teacher he needed"; but, "As the Lord allotted *to each teacher*" the divided labour. Stanley suggests that Paul takes up, and with his own meaning adopts, their depreciatory distinction: "Yes, you did but plant. It was Apollos who watered, and so brought your work to anything like what could be called a successful issue!" Note here, as in 2 Cor. vi. 4, they are working under God's orders, at God's work. [In Mark xvi. 20, "*the Lord* (*Christ*) works *with* them."] [Cf. the inscription on the University: "Louvain planted, Mechlin watered, Cæsar gave the increase."]

Ver. 8. **One.**—Our *status, quâ* the work, the increase, the Great Employer, is precisely the same. No parallel to John x. 30.

Ver. 9.—Notice the R.V. *Q.d.* "All of us together *belong to God*, the field, the building, the company of workers in the field, or on the building. The fellowship only between man and man, God being above them all." But A.V. is supported by Rom. xvi. 3, 9, 21; 2 Cor. i. 24, viii. 23, also vi. 1 (but note the reading). "*Husbandry*" speaks of growth from within; "*building*" of growth by additions from without.

Ver. 10.—**Was given . . . I laid,** *q.d.* "when I was at Corinth." "*A* foundation," "which I subjectively laid in my teaching at Corinth, because God had already laid the same objectively in heaven" (Evans). "Laid objectively for the whole Church in the Great Facts [by God], . . . laid subjectively in the hearts of the Christians at Corinth as the firm ground of their personal hopes by Paul" (Beet).

Vers. 11-15.—See Homiletic Analysis; also Appended Note. No valid analogy to

warrant the application of this to the doctrine of *Purgatory*. This rests upon (*a*) the distinction drawn between *venial* and *mortal* sins with *temporal* and *eternal* penalties attached, and (*b*) the doctrine of *merit*. The *temporal* penalty of sins not "paid off" at the date of death must be "paid up" in Purgatory fire. The accumulated stock of *merit*, of Christ and the saints—a surplus beyond their own requirements—may be drawn upon by an indulgence, and the amount be applied to reducing the purgatorial term.

Ver. 16.—**A temple** (R.V.) misses, or denies, the typology binding Old Testament and New Testament together here. A case where, as often (*e.g.* xi. 20), one of the great leading facts of the Old Covenant is divested of its temporary, local robing and embodiment, and brought forward into the new world of the New Testament, to find a new embodiment in the Church. The old building has gone; the new shrine where God dwells on earth is growing, rising, every day. A local Church, and still more the aggregate Church, is the New Testament form of the old Temple idea. It is the Temple to-day. *This* a *collective* Temple; in vi. 19, 20 an *individual* application of the same idea is found. The word here is that which signifies, not the whole structure inclusive of the surrounding courtyard, but only *the actual Temple building itself*. "*In*" is here practically "among"; as distinguished from the indwelling *in* the *man*, vi. 19 (see Appended Note from Evans).

Ver. 17.—**Defile** and **destroy**, same word; combining "impair," "mar," "ruin," "destroy."

Ver. 18.—Cf. xv. 33 for the *thought* (not for the *word*); men seem to persuade themselves that *they* shall somehow evade the penalty of sin, although others do not escape. **Thinks.**—As viii. 2; not with any hesitation, but with much confidence. **Among you.**—And yet taking his place, and holding his own, as a *wise* man of the world "*in the world*." "Can't be done! Incompatible things altogether!" The connection between inflated self-esteem and a slavish submission to party leaders is exposed in iv. 6. Surely no implied caution to, or censure on, Apollos!

Ver. 19.—Note the small change of translation. Quotation of words of Eliphaz, from Job v. 13. [On the general principle of such a quotation being taken as part of what "*is written*," see Homily on xv. 33, § 1.]

Ver. 20.—Ps. xciv. 11. "*Reasonings*" (R.V.).

Vers. 21-23.—See Homiletic Analysis. Note the unexpected turn of phrase; not "Christ is yours." "Rise to the plane of His life and your relations to Him, then you are a possession, not owners. You are feudal holders of your estate, but the baron himself was the 'king's man.'"

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 1—4.

"*Babes in Christ.*"—(Read Critical Notes, on "*carnal.*")

**I. The Creator has stamped His own unity upon His many-sectioned creation** in the many homologies which link together part and part, and, above all, natural things and spiritual things, physical facts and the facts of the world of morals and religion. Just because Christ knew these links of idea and these correspondences most perfectly, He spake parables as never man spake. He saw Nature parabolic as never man saw it. He stood at the central point of God's Idea, and saw its radiating lines of expression touching, traversing, connecting, the concentric [and, as the geometer says, "similar"] areas of diverse classes of facts. The physical history of the human body, the natural, morally neutral history of the development of the human mind, is a Parable in Nature, easily, early, always read. [1 John ii. 12-14 is a good example of this way of reading. (*a*) There are the "little children" who barely know more, but who do know this, that they "know their Father," and that because of forgiven sin there is nothing but love between them. Loving, happy, living childhood, content to be alive and know Him and His favour. (*b*) There are the "young men," victorious over the Wicked One, with well-knit body, and the firm tread of vigorous early manhood, to which the indwelling Word is bread and life. (*c*) There are the "fathers," of whom only one thing is said—"they know Him that is from the beginning." The strength, *élan*, enterprise, of manhood is perhaps gone; in a sense, the life has returned to its starting-point—as "children" they "knew Him"; but now with a deeper insight, with the experience of an intercourse of

long years' standing; as an adult, mature man who is a father, for the first time "knows" *his* father.] In St. Paul "*babes*" is never a word of praise. He hurries forward to, and hurries forward his converts to, "*perfection*"; the adult manhood, with its perfection; of harmonious development of every power and faculty and grace; of "knowledge of the world" of spiritual things with which for years the man "in Christ" has been conversant; of ripeness of character without any first touch of senile failure or weakness or decay. These are "*babes*" at Corinth.

II. **Babes and carnal.**—1. "*Natural*" (chap. ii.) would hardly have been too strong for the fact. "*Envying*," "*strife*," "*schisms*," and these ruling and raging, are incompatible with the "*spiritual*" man's life. These are "works of the flesh." In fact, the discrepancy, as to area and included human contents, between the Ideal Church and its actual, historical, disciplinary expression and embodiment and enumeration, had already begun to appear. The Church, as its Lord reckons its census, may here and there overpass the bounds of the Church, as our humanly designed and most faithfully administered methods mark it off from "the world." But much oftener it shrinks far within the boundary-line of our survey, and leaves the Church, of any real, effective, sanctified life, a central area of occupation within a much larger one which is hardly more than in name and claim and ownership still Christ's. These men are still within the bound of the external organisation; the branch most utterly dormant, if not utterly dead, is still in mechanical connection with the Vine, as Paul cultivates and cares for it. He had not cut these off, as he bade them without pity or delay do with incestuous man (v. 5). Indeed, in the hopefulness of charity, he goes further than logically would be possible, and speaks of these men over whom "sin has" such clear "dominion" (Rom. vi. 14), *as* "*in Christ*," though "babes." [*Does he?* Has he really given to those who had lapsed from any but the external, mechanical connection with Christ, the elementary lessons which, elementary as they are, belonged really to a stage in advance of them?] But it is at most the tender judgment which without any tampering with, or disloyalty to, the inevitable distinction between "*natural*" and "*spiritual*," is willing for the moment to look no deeper than the outward profession and the still maintained connection with the Church. None but a reckless hand will lightly disturb even the outward connection, if it has at one time meant life, and is not manifestly declared unreal by flagrant sin or long-continued indifference. So long as it continues, there is always the happy possibility that the branch may again fill and thrill and throb with life; it will not lightly be disturbed. The claim of the Church is paramount that it should be kept pure; the claim of the Head of the Church demands that all dead or unworthy membership be cut off; but the claim of the redeemed soul demands that the membership, once admitted, shall be tenderly dealt with, and rated at its most hopeful value. "*Envying, strifes, partisanship*," and the like; yet Paul will concede to them a place "*in Christ*," if it be only as "*babes*," and will "*speak to them*" accordingly.

2. *How many members never get beyond the stage of "babes in Christ."*—There *is* a beauty about infancy, in nature and in grace. Nothing more charming than the simple, unaffected, direct love of God's "little children" towards Him and towards each other. Happy manhood, both in nature and grace, which never loses the affectionate, childlike heart; keeping it fresh under, and along with, all the manly gains in knowledge and experience. A beauty about the simple directness of a child's trust in all that is told to it; it may be deceived and misled, but the faith of a little child is more beautiful and more receptive of grace than the cynical scepticism of the man who always begins by suspecting, and presumes the worst. A beauty about the loving obedience which belongs to

at least the ideal of childhood, and is one of the first, most tender fruits of the Spirit's new birth. What music in God's ear, and how delightful to a "perfect man" in the life of God, the first, unschooled, open, spontaneous, unconventional utterances of their thoughts and experiences, from the lips of God's little children! But this beauty is no beauty when it becomes permanent. Fifteen, or fifty, with the face and mind and powers of five years of age, would be a calamity to the grown child, an agony to parents, a subject of mockery or of pity to outsiders. She sees of the travail of her soul and is satisfied,—that mother into whose arms is laid the helpless babe, that does not yet know her, or know itself, but simply lives, and is perfectly formed and healthy. To Him who died that His people "might have life," that He might Himself "see His seed," life is better than death; life is full of all possibilities; death has no possibilities, no future, but corruption. It is some measure of reward for His "pangs," some measure of "satisfaction," when His people begin to live, even as "*babes in*" Him. In a human home, in Christian lands at any rate, the child that grows weakling, puny, sickly, deformed, often calls out a love that seems intensified by the very need of love in the dependent creature; the tenderer the child, the tenderer the love. But the "satisfaction" is in the children who grow hearty and strong, who develop girlish beauty and youthful strength, until at last womanhood and manhood fill the parents' heart with satisfying joy. What a disappointment to Paul [may the same human word be attributed to Christ also?] that after these years, since he first went to Corinth, these members of the Church there, "enriched in" everything for the sustenance and training of the new-born life (i. 5-7), were still, at the most favourable estimate, only "*babes in Christ*"! There was no beauty or satisfaction or honour in such a standstill life. There are such in every Church. Always learning to stand, to walk, to do; never accomplishing much at either; indeed, spiritually always learning to live. To them the Church is hardly yet a school; certainly not a workshop; more truly a nursery. Every pastor has many such, who must not only be "looked after" incessantly, lest, like naughty or heedless children, they stray away into the world, but who must be nursed lest the feeble flicker of life be extinguished in death. How large a part of the work of the Churches, how large a part of the care of the ministry, must be absorbed in the working of keeping up to the level of even "*babes in Christ*," some who have been in outward membership for years! [The coincidence of our paragraph with Heb. v. 11-14 is noteworthy.]

3. Paul refers to *their food*: "*Milk, not meat.*"—No humble child of God's family but acknowledges how often, in some of the lessons of God's school, he has never seemed to get beyond the A B C of teaching. The same discipline year after year, the same trials, because the one lesson has never been perfectly learned yet. To promote His scholar into the work of the next higher "form," whilst yet the lessons of the lower have never been mastered, would only be to ensure bad work, to attempt to "rush up" a building upon a badly laid foundation. The Jerusalem scoffers in Isaiah's day cried half in scorn, half in anger, "Whom shall he [the prophet] teach knowledge? . . . weaned babes? Does he take us for such, with his precept upon precept, . . . here a little, there a little?" (Isa. xxviii. 9-13). The words are read by some, and are as true, if they be seriously spoken, perhaps by the prophet himself. What they said in scorn was a simple, sad necessity. They were fit only for such lessons. There are truths which alone the children can take in. There are truths which are of "the secret of the Lord," only revealable to the grown men. There must not be on the part of the human teachers—from any mistaken policy, or from any fear of being misunderstood by their youngest pupil—any such keeping back of truth as makes what is taught all but falsehood. Economy, reserve, are not for man, for ecclesiastics, to practise. If the Spirit of God has only gradually (Heb. i. 1)

brought out the full round of truth, it has been from no desire to conceal anything; the disclosure has been conditioned by the receptiveness of the scholars, and by that only. To Nicodemus the Master Himself distinguished between "earthly things" and "heavenly things" (John iii. 12), as being of different grades of comprehensibleness. Human teaching will *adapt*; it will not for the teacher's sake *reserve* anything which is needful and can be communicated. The human difficulty is to teach elementary truth without so far distorting it that before anything more can be added, something must be unlearned; we must often pull down a little before we can "graft" the new work upon the old. The model should be the teaching of the Revealing Spirit; all absolutely true, so far as it goes; no need for unlearning in order to new learning; from milk to meat in His teaching is one orderly, harmonious progress and growth of truth. But how long He has to say, "*Ye were not able to bear it; neither yet now*," etc.

4. *Note the special token of carnality, of infancy.*—They are children with their favourites, over whom they boast and wrangle and quarrel. No sign of "manhood in Christ," to be so devoted to one man, or one type of minister, as to appreciate and be helped by no other.

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 5—9.

*Paul; Apollos; God.*—"Co-workers," Paul ventures to say (2 Cor. vi. 1). Not only are Paul who plants and Apollos who waters "one" (ver. 8), but these "three agree in one" purpose and result.

I. **Three ways of reading—three heart-inflections** of tone in reading—this verse.—1. "A Paul *may* plant, an Apollos *may* water; but God alone can give the increase!" The despondent, despairing tone of the physical and mental reaction of an earnest worker, after a day of effort and "failure"; said as if God gave charily and grudgingly the increase, and the chances were to be taken as against His giving. Or said by a worker who goes out mechanically, without much heart in his work, to discount apologetically beforehand the failure which he expects, and *deserves*; or his wonderfully wise "explanation" of his failure when the day is over: "Ah! you see, a Paul may plant," etc. Very pious, but dishonouring to God. 2. "Paul must, . . . Apollos must, . . . God must," etc. The formal, sometimes useful, summation of the conditions of success. One of the "Rules" hung up at the gate of the field, to be considered and complied with by every worker. On these conditions only can the work be done, on these only can success be claimed. Usually God will not do the work of Paul or Apollos, will do nothing without them. They must remember that they can effect nothing without His co-operation. Paul? Nothing! Apollos? Nothing! God? All in all! (ver. 7). Yet there is a better reading of the verse still. 3. "Paul planted, Apollos watered, God *did* give the increase." The *historical* rendering and reading. *Always, in invariable sequence, the history of any true labour for God.* So certainly as the first two terms of the series are found, so certainly does the third follow to complete it. If Paul has done his part, if Apollos has done his part, God may be reckoned upon. **God always does give the increase.** The historical view is the healthy view, warranted by the history of the universal, working Church.

II. **The human workers.**—Are *human*. Macmillan (*Bible Teachings in Nature*, p. 101) points out that corn never grows spontaneously, is never self-sown, self-diffused; [this not true of Divine Truth, of the Bible, without limitation]; depends, as the seed of "life" does ordinarily, upon being sown by man's hand. [The Greatest of the workers was human; Who might say to His Church, "I have

planted, ye have watered"; Who said, "Others laboured, ye have entered into their labours.] *With all human variety.* Many and many-fashioned tools are needed to do the work of God. The material is many-fashioned. Each worker is made to be a specialist in some particular kind of material. Every kind of material, every type of mind and heart, is somebody's speciality. The worker and the work, the minister and the man he is made to help, are both to be found; if only they find each other, all is well. The Great Director of the work knows where to lay His hand on the Paul, where to find the Apollos, the very man to do the work which wants doing. *With all human limitations.* Paul need not be distressed because he cannot do the work of Apollos. Nobody need blame Apollos because he cannot pioneer and "plant" like Paul. No man is made to do everything. Let a man frankly accept the limitation; let him consecrate to the Work and the Worker his ability thus bounded; then let him set himself *to be at his own best* for Christ. Paul is not to chafe against the fact that he is not an Apollos; still less is an Apollos to be thinking how much better he would have done the work, and how much more faithfully, than Paul, if only he had been set to Paul's task with Paul's talent. Depreciating criticism of others, disheartened views of oneself, are equally mischievous and needless. The work has always been done, and was intended to be done, by a division of work amongst workers, each of whom has a limitation of ability. Neither Paul nor Apollos was an "all-round" man, a monstrosity of all perfection. [It does not appear here; there was nothing in the facts of the case to suggest it, but ordinarily one must add, *With all human infirmities.* Ideally perfect work, even in a man's own special "line," never gets done. Nor does any most perfect plan ever get worked with ideal intelligence, or even with ideal faithfulness. "The Best is the enemy of the Good," says a German proverb. Practical wisdom in the Church will not indeed be supinely indifferent to any chance of improvement of workers or methods, yet it will accept, and make the very most of, the workers who are "to hand," with all their *humanity.* No organisation, no reorganisation, will ever eliminate from the conditions under which God's work has to be done, the blameless, natural imperfections of the workers, or even their moral imperfections. See the men with whom God in Old Testament and New Testament alike did His work. We see the glorious results of the past; we see the best points of the conspicuous workers who contributed to them. But a nearer view, a more intimate acquaintance, would have shown them very human, most of them average, not only in ability, but in goodness; only a few of first rank in power and sainthood. But the glorious result is due to the great worker, God, who accomplished it by using the tools which were to His hand.]

III. **The work.**—*Is of many forms.* "*Planting*," "*watering.*" No "reaping" is mentioned. A good case showing how such illustrative language does not bear insisting on beyond the one point of analogy which it is used to illustrate. Paul's "*planting*" of a Church was a very real "reaping" of individual souls. The illustration here used is valid thus far—that many labourers, and many successive "layers" of faithful toil, contribute to the great Result. One man can in the deepest sense rarely claim to be the instrument (say) of a conversion. Ordinarily he has had the native ability, sanctified, to bring to a "head" what has been working in a soul pervasively, as the result of many a preceding labourer's toil and prayers. How "*planting*" and "*watering*" are both needed to lead to full, ripe growth, is well seen in the case of the Master Himself. Any day of His three years' ministry might be summarised in the sentence: "A Sower went forth (that morning) to sow." He might have said, "I only *planted.*" The very parables of Matt. xiii. illustrate His words. How few moments it occupies to read the Sower; how much time has been spent in expounding it. In how few

words contained; how many myriads of words, how many acres of paper, spent in its enforcement. Rightly so. That morning He had gone out to sow; He was sowing from the boat that day *seed truths*, packed in small compass, but with living germs in them, which might be, and were meant to be, developed in many-branching expositions and applications of truth. His three years' work was a seminal one, almost entirely; acts, works, Himself, in historical record,—the seed of a Gospel. But the Spirit of Pentecost "*watered*," and, with a leap, that seed started into life and immediate blossom and fruitful harvest. "These things understood not His disciples at the first, but," etc., (John xii. 16). Perhaps not too much to say that without the watering of the Spirit the words of Christ must still remain seeds only, undeveloped potentialities, to some who read and even expound them. [Peter at Pentecost has got hold of all essential Christian truth, yet there is a development in some small degree to be traced in the clearness with which he and others apprehended Divine truth, particularly in regard to the Personality of their Master.] The work is to bring men to "*believe*." It aims at making and building up "*believers*." This certainly is a seminal, germinant work. When a sinner is brought to saving faith in Christ, a work is begun, *and only begun*, which may fruitfully fill eternity. How happy the selection and the succession of Pastors and Ministers with which the Great Head of His Church has often provided both its Churches and individual souls! How constantly the very man who can "water" is sent to follow up the man who can "*plant*"! How one man's appeal follows up another man's sermon! Would it not be oftener so, if in simple faith the choice and order were left to Him?

III. **The increase and success.**—"*As the Lord gave to every man.*" "Success" is as complex a thing as the labour which leads up to it; as many-sided as the work and the men. Again (as in I. 1), let it be said that there is always a real and true "success" and "*increase*" so surely as there has been the prayerful, faithful "*planting*" and "*watering*." [N.B.—In the Sower (Matt. xiii.), if there are three causes of failure, there are also three degrees of success (in one case exceedingly abundant), as certainly as "a sower goes forth to sow."] It may be a "success" whose full measure only begins to be seen at a second or third remove from the man whose work it really crowns. He is, *e.g.*, a minister who only knows of the salvation of one man or one boy; but that boy becomes the evangelist who gathers in his sheaves by the hundred wherever he works. From heaven perhaps the original labourer sees for the first time his true success. Paul's "success" and "increase" were not least when his words saved Luther, and when Luther's comment on Paul saved John Wesley. [Eadie (*Paul the Preacher*, pp. 94, 95) gives a good case of germinant "*increase*." There lived in last century in England an obscure woman with an only son. When he was but seven years old she died. But her image and her prayers haunted him by land and sea, in the ports of Britain, on the beach of Africa, when shipping manacled negroes, or carousing on shore with a seaman's zest. His heart was touched; he became a minister renowned for his impressive conversation and correspondence. His words reached Claudius Buchanan, and sent him to India. The recital of *his* labours so attracted Judson that it drew him to Burmah. The same gift to a mother's prayers threw light on the soul of Scott, the commentator. It also strengthened Cowper, and gave birth to the Olney Hymns. Wilberforce was greatly indebted to the same source, and his *Practical View* brought the truth home to the mind of Legh Richmond. Thus John Newton's mother's prayers gave birth to his preaching and correspondence, to two missionaries, a commentary, a Christian statesman, and a pastor. Yet her grave and her name are unknown.]

IV. **The reward of the workers.**—Over-subtle exegesis to say, "According to

his labour, not according to his success." Formally true, as a matter of lexical interpretation of "*labour*"; but too narrow for the thought of Paul, and for the fact. The Saviour has summarised the Divine Method of reward in the twin parables of the Pounds and the Talents [Luke xix.; Matt. xxv. As alike as twins, and as different. As alike as two faces, or twenty; built up on the same general plan, made up of the same basal facts (N.B. in the Pounds, however, two sets of facts are interwoven; there are subject-citizens who become rebels, as well as subject-servants); yet perfectly distinct and individual, in their occasion, in their construction, and in their teaching; each exactly congruous to its occasion and its audience; each, in even small details, internally harmonious and self-consistent.] In their contrast they exhibit complementary truths. Servants of Christ, with equal endowments [each of the ten a pound], may be in very diverse degree "successful." One may be tenfold more diligent or devoted than another; with opportunities fairly equal the issues of their life's "*labour*" may vary in the widest degrees. Some barely bring "one pound" of increase from their pound. Some of the same "pound" make ten. And the reward is proportionate. "Heaven" is no indiscriminate prize to every servant of God. There are many heavens in Heaven; as many heavens as men. Happy the man of a "ten cities" heaven. But on the other hand servants of God with widely different endowments may be equally faithful. It means as much for some to bring one "talent" for one, as for another to bring two talents where two were given. The man who adds five to five is no more "good and faithful a servant" than the man who should add one to one. The same words of praise, the same "joy of the Lord," await the "*labour*" of those whose fidelity in labour has been equal. Success and results are not overlooked. Only God can appraise them truly. His servants may carve out for themselves the measure of their reward, whilst it is all of grace that there is a reward at all. But He does not overlook faithfulness. A Paul's "*labour*" and the spirit of it; the "*labour*" of an Apollos and the fruit of it,—all is noted, and noted for exactly just "*reward*."

V. **The Great Worker is God.**—"Ministers *by whom*," instrumentally, God brings men to faith. They are only efficient when in His hands. The strength, the wisdom, for labour come from Him. The wisest "*labourer*" works where, and for so long as, He appoints him in the field, the vineyard. "God is all, in all" the work and "in all" the workers. That it is "**God's** *husbandry*," not Paul's; that the real Worker, the real Author, of the "*increase*" is God, needs to be remembered by the human "*co-workers*" on two occasions: (1) when they seem to have "succeeded"; (2) and, more urgently, when they seem to have "failed."

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 10—15.

*Work tried by Fire.*

I. **The imagery employed.**—Ancient cities, and some modern ones (*e.g.* St. Petersburg), not so sharply divided into rich quarters and poor quarters as often the case with us. Houses of highest and humblest much more closely associated and intermingled. Palace and hovel might literally jostle. Buildings adorned with costly marbles [= "*precious stones*"], perhaps made priceless by the lavished art of the sculptor, stood surrounded with (sometimes literal "lean-to") houses of stucco, of wood, or even of clay, thatched with hay and stubble, the houses of the artisan, the poor, the slave. St. Paul sees the work of a great fire, such as that which under Nero was made the occasion of a great persecution of the Christians, or that which a century before, on the capture of Corinth itself by Memmius, had laid the city in ruin. [Not to be made too precise, but may be conceived of thus:] The fire breaks out (say)

at midnight, in some obscure dwelling, and quickly reduces to a heap of ashes the frail tenement of "*wood, hay, stubble.*" It catches adjoining houses; the winds fan and spread the flames, till a whole quarter of the city is wrapped in a conflagration which seems to Paul a fit emblem of the fires of "*The Day*" of all days, God's Day of testing and doom. In the morning little knots of curious spectators and of sufferers wander about the ruins, discussing the work of the night. The slave is looking for his house of wood, hay, stubble. It stood there where that heap of ashes lies. He stirs them with his foot, and lays bare the stone foundations still unconsumed. The fire could not touch those. And, like many more, the homeless man recounts to any sympathetic listeners how his own life and that of his family are all they could save out of the wreck and loss of all. They were awakened, perhaps, and saved at the very last moment, "*saved through the fire.*" Another little group gathers round the stronger-built and still-standing stone walls of a better class of house. Stucco, woodwork, ornament have perished; but the man who built it "*has his reward*" for the money and pains spent over his substantial walls. There is something, more or less, to begin with, in restoring his ruined house. Close by stands a temple or a palace,as if almost contemptuous of its ruined neighbours, as it stands in the isolation of its survival. It has passed through the ordeal almost unscathed. Contents uninjured; cunning works of the goldsmith; spoils of conquered nations,—all untouched by the fire. Its costly marbles and statues within have not felt it. Its strong walls, besmirched with smoke indeed, have defied the flames. That builder, too, has his reward. He built with good material; it stands the fire.

II. **Paul's use of the imagery.**—1. In the course of a somewhat lengthy stay in the city, Paul had founded the Church of Corinth. No man could pretend to dispute or share with him the honour of being the "*master-builder,*" the first to preach Christ in the city. Some little time after his departure, he sent over from Ephesus his friend Apollos to carry on the work. Apollos, an Alexandrian Jew, worked in perfect harmony of heart and aim after Paul; but perhaps felt himself more free than Paul had done to use the Alexandrian rhetoric and human learning in setting forth the Gospel. Every Greek was a born "politician," or at least a born party man; the Corinthian Church early showed the effects of this partisan spirit within its membership. Parties sprang up with men's names for their badges. [Little "*schisms*" Paul calls them, dissidences *within* the body, not yet grown to separations *from* it.] Whether we have the exact names iv. 6 perhaps makes a little doubtful, nor is it clear that Paul's list is exhaustive. Yet the characteristics and tendencies of the parties may be easily gathered. 2. There was an "Apollos" party. They liked such rhetoric as Apollos gave them, and chose to think their intelligence flattered by what of philosophy he may have employed in the shaping of the truth. Their danger was perhaps (*e.g.* in 1 Cor. xv.) to exalt reason at the expense of faith; we may not unreasonably think that in trying to be philosophical Christians they were denying or refining away the facts and doctrines of the Gospel, frittering away their power, or rejecting them as contrary to reason. It might not to be an unwarrantable borrowing of a modern name to call them the "rationalising" party at Corinth. 3. There was a "Cephas" party, belonging to that "wing" of the Christian Church who had been Jews, and whom at this period of Paul's life we everywhere find dogging his footsteps, denying his Apostolic standing, often defaming his character. These at Corinth glorified Peter,—no, "Cephas." "Call him by his honest Hebrew name!" Old school men, who could not so rapidly or readily unlearn as Paul had done the habits and training and teaching of years; who mistrusted him as "sadly radical"; who, though Christians, sought to enforce upon the Gentiles the worn-out ritual of Moses' law and the now meaningless circumcision. Old

style, conservative men, with a leaning to ceremonialism. The "ritual" party. 4. "No," said another party. "We stand by Paul. He will have none of your Law for Christians. We will have none of it. He is a 'liberty' man. We are 'liberty' men too." Only, where he meant the formal law of Moses, they meant the very principle of law itself. When he taught "liberty," they interpreted "licence," and some lived "licentiousness." The Christian Church from the beginning has always had some too "liberal" in thought and in practice. 5. Yet one party more. They owned no human teacher, indeed. They had climbed to a sublime, serene height far above where their poor, misguided brethren were rallying round, and fighting over, this man or that, Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas. Possibly hyper-conservatives, fresh from the Lord's brother, James, in Jerusalem; at all events, they said, "We are of Christ!" A beautiful party-cry; very attractive to the unwary and simple-hearted. But when it means "Christ as we understand Him" it is not quite so beautiful. 6. So, then, to the Church at Corinth had happened on a small scale what has been happening in the Church of Christ ever since. These were all Christians as yet. The differences between them and their heathen or Jewish neighbours were far greater than those which distinguished them from each other. All acknowledged one Divine Head, and had some great doctrines connected with Him as a bond of union. But some of them were building up the Church [and Christian lives] with doctrine and practice which Paul regarded as "*wood, hay, stubble*"; useless at best, and sure to perish in "*The Day*," when God's judgment should "*try every man's work, of what sort it is.*" Some there were, he knew, who happily were building after his own heart and judgment, "*gold, silver, precious stone.*" Great should be their reward! Some also there were whose work gave him only mingled satisfaction. "*Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour*," partly according to *how* much he has done, but still more according to *what kind* of work he has done. Of those for whom he feared that they should find the labour of their life wasted, yet he hoped they should at least "*save themselves*," if even like men snatched out of the flames which left them nothing but "*their foundation*" and "*their lives.*" [The opening words of the paragraph suggest:] "Woe to any builders whose work should really be a disturbing of the very Foundation itself, other than which none may lay a basis for faith, or life, or hope." 7. These Church parties at Corinth were our modern "Churches" and "sects" in miniature. The causes at work at Corinth have never ceased to work wherever we have Christian men, until we have a Christianity not even outwardly at one. Yet we need to give Paul's recognition that they are nearer to each other than to the world outside. Their unity is a more striking and deep thing than their diversities. They are one Church still. The broadest and deepest diversities at Corinth were still within the Church, insomuch as they were only surface cleavages; they did not run down into the foundation. That was one. Men weep because there is not external unity of all the Churches in one communion. As well weep that the sapling, which a thousand years ago was one simple undivided stem, has branched out into the oak with its hundred arms, many of them really big trees themselves. The branching is an inevitable consequence of life. And the tree is one at stock and root. Minds will always differ in cast and capacity. Training is of endless diversity. Race will make a difference. No one man ever sees the whole round of a truth; hardly any one Church or age does; no two ever see the same phase of presentation of it. There will always be men liable to pay too great honour to Reason; always some too ready to insist upon and overvalue Ceremonial. Reasons convincing to one do not appeal to another. An order of service not to the taste of one suits another and helps him. And so on, in endless diversity. What then? Recog-

nise the fact that the diversity is a necessity. It has often become an evil; it need not be, and will not be, when men become *broad* as Paul, and recognise other patterns of doctrine and life and church order as all fairly to be included in the One Church. 8. It were a good thing for some to be as *narrow* as Paul about the "*One Foundation.*" It is unreal "liberality" to attempt to include within the "*Christian*" Church both those whose Christ is God-man, the Father's equal and man's fellow, Messiah of the Jews, Mediator for the Race, and, on the other side, those whose Jesus is at the highest a creature whom His Creator could annihilate, and who was perhaps a mere man, who might or even did make mistakes, a man not superior to Paul, and to whom Christianity owes not more than it does to Paul. Their status and acceptance before God depend on other considerations, but they are not on the Foundation in Paul's sense. The lesson of the paragraph is not indifference to what a man believes, or what his neighbour believes, or how he works or worships. Each should be honest and earnest in accepting and living and defending that special aspect or portion of The Truth, which he or his Church sees. Experience shows that, as a rule, they do most for the broad work of Christ who work with a fixed creed and with a definite Church attachment. Each should give and claim equal recognition. The paragraph teaches charity, since experience also teaches that perfectly honest church- and creed-builders have built in what others saw clearly was "*wood, hay, stubble,*" and have rejected what some saw was "*precious stone,*" if not "*gold*" or "*silver,*" of system and doctrine. Probably no uninspired teacher ever built upon the One Foundation nothing but what would endure the fire.

III. **A personal application of the words lies not far from this.**—1. If a man is to be saved in "*The Day*" of God's judgment, Christ must be the foundation of his life. "*Saved*" and "*perishing*" (2 Cor. ii. 15) mingle together it the closest intercourse of life, with closest similarity of outward course and bearing. Indeed, sometimes the balance of amiability or of strict probity seems to be on the side of the "perishing." What is there to make Paul's classification so sharply definite?

2. *Dig down to the foundations of the two lives.*—In the man really "*being saved*" this is the starting-point: Time was when he felt himself a sinner, guilty before God, and his heart full of sin. He cast himself on God's mercy in Christ; he was forgiven; ever since, the Spirit has dwelt in him, doing something towards cleansing the heart, and putting there a new motive for all he does and feels—love to God who gave him Christ. If not, he is not a Christian. Others are "*perishing,*" because, go back far as we will, dig down deeply as we may, we cannot find that. There never was the fundamental experience of "*sin*" and of "*faith in Christ*" as the "*spiritual man*" understands them. Reform may only be throwing the arch of a culvert over the sin of the past and the sin of the heart; the man covered up his past and began to build the new life over it. But there, lowest of all, are the past and the sin, not Christ and His atonement. The other foundation and beginning of all life-building is Rock! [Turning over a new leaf is a good thing if it do not mean simply fastening down the old, without having first the record "*blotted out.*"] The superstructure of **Eddystone Lighthouse** was good enough when it was removed a few years ago; but the sea was undermining the foundation. **A good superstructure upon a good foundation**: lesson the first.

3. *Then build something upon the foundation.*—See in the suburbs of growing towns unfinished property. Walls of a certain height, but left unfinished; perhaps hardly more than the foundations got in when the money failed. Ground lies waste; weeds grow, rubbish accumulates, till it becomes difficult to see without some search whether there are any foundations at all. Like some lives. The true foundation was made right some years ago, but scarcely anything has been

put upon it since. The accumulations of a worldly life have gathered, until an observer—and perhaps the man himself—hardly knows whether the foundations are still there. Rear a Christian character; build a superstructure of work for Christ. **No better evidence that the foundation is there,** and is sound, **than the** growing, fair **superstructure.** Build something. Some builders never get very far. What they build is good—stone, if not gold or silver, but it never amounts to much. A day's unfaithfulness pulls down a week's building. "Sinning and repenting." "Ever learning, never coming to the knowledge of the truth."

4. *Build something every day.*—"How did Michael Angelo accomplish so much?" "*Nulla dies sine linea!*" he replied. No day without something which will endure the testing fire: this will be the secret of some very unobtrusive, little-noticed lives which by-and-by are crowned with large reward when *the reward is according to the work*—in amount as well as quality (cf. *supra*).

5. *Test all employments by this.*—"Will they stand '*the fire*'? Do they now help towards an abiding, thorough Christian character? Or are the things I have done to-day mere '*wood, hay, stubble,*' sure to perish?"

6. *Build something to-day; at least, find the foundation to-day.*—If to lay the one and only foundation [so far as *we* can be said to lay it at all] were the last act of a wasted life, the builder should escape "*saved as by fire.*" But it would be a very unworthy use to make of Christ and His salvation. "**To-day.**"

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 16—20.

*The Temple of God.*—Very little in this paragraph which is not dealt with elsewhere. For vers. 16, 17 see, *e.g.*, vi. 18-20; for vers. 18-20 see, *e.g.*, i. 18 *sqq.* Note, however, that the Temple is here *collective*, the whole Church; in vi. 18-20 it is *individual*—indeed, the very body of the Christian man.

I. **Note how, from paragraph to paragraph, the illustrations change.**—In 1-4 Paul is the "nursing father" (Isa. xlix. 23); the Church is the house where "the holy seed" is growing up, or ought to be, into strength and ripeness of godliness. In ver. **5** figure is dropped, unless "ministers" be a figure. Paul and his friend and successor Apollos are employés of God, enrolled in His service, to bring men to Christ and to faith in Him; John Baptist-like, to bring Bridegroom and Bride together. There has been "a division of labour," and the thought is made pictorial in ver. 6. Paul and his fellow-worker are seen toiling each at his task in God's field or in God's vineyard—"labourers in the vineyard," each of whom is to receive "whatsoever is right" according to his work. [There is more in the Scripture than was in the Scribe. The mind of the Spirit is often fuller than any thought in the mind of the human writer. Yet the use of the illustration goes so little beyond the division of tasks amongst the qualified workers, and the payment according to results and fidelity, that an expositor may hesitate to fill out these two hints with the typology of the Vine and the Vineyard of God, found, *e.g.*, in Ps. lxxx.; Isa. v. 2; Ezek. xv., xvii.; Matt. xxi. 28, 33, *sqq.*; Luke xiii. 6 (where the two figures for Israel are conjoined); and, with most profound significance, John xv. 1, and Matt. xxvi. 20 (adding, perhaps, 1 Cor. ix. 7).] Then again the picture changes; as the "dissolving-view picture" fades out when another is superposed upon it, so the busy "*labourers*" at their "*husbandry*" have scarcely been shown to us before the *field* has faded and a "*building*" is rising as we watch. There is no doubt who is the Architect; whose is the great, leading, essential Idea of such a house. It is a busy scene. Not Paul or Apollos only are "workers together with God" this time. Every

Corinthian teacher, every Corinthian believer, is a co-worker too. Paul has done his part of the work; "well and truly laid" does this Master-mason declare his foundation to be. Yet more truly the "*foundation*" is bed-rock; of God's "laying," in the prehistoric ages of a wider than earthly history (Rev. xiii. 8; 1 Pet. i. 20).

"The Church's one Foundation
Is Jesus Christ the Lord."

What Paul or Cephas may lay is rather the lowest courses of the masonry, which, in their turn, rest upon this "Rock of Ages" (Isa. xxvi. 4, margin). It is mercy and blessing to man that he is permitted, privileged, to be a worker "together with God"; but we touch the fringe of The Great Problem in all human thinking—the problem of Evil—when we see how this has entailed the invariable consequence that the design of the Great Architect never gets fairly carried out. Nor is it only that the workers blunder or are innocently incompetent; the deviation from the design of the Great Builder has a moral character. The material is bad; the building is careless; the work will be fit for nothing but the fire—very much of it. In our paragraph the building is specialised in its character. What we saw as a great house rising is now the Temple of God. And then the figure drops once more. Upon the screen are portraits; Corinthians strutting themselves in their fancied "*wisdom*"; He who knoweth men pronouncing His verdict: "Fools! You are only setting a trap for your own feet!" And the chapter leads up to the last solemn sentences in which is recited God's "grant" of all men, all things, to His Church, to the individual Christian. A party said at Corinth, "We are of Christ." The truth is far wider than that. They all "*are Christ's*"; He is not "divided" (i. 13); He belongs to no one party; all the parties belong to Him; as yet, all the "schisms" at Corinth have not cut off any of them from Him. The seemingly so humble "*We are of Christ*" too easily passes over into the miserably exclusive "**We** *are of Christ.*" "Ye are all Christ's; all that is His is yours; all things are yours."

II. **The Church is the Temple of God.**—[N.B. *the*, not *a*.] Fulfilling the age-long truth that God loves to dwell amongst men. "**God with us**" is the keynote in which, if Sin had not put all things out of tune, the story of the relations of God and man would have run on in one lovely strain of most perfect music. He planted His Tent in the midst of the tents of Israel in the wilderness; He accepted the Royal Palace built for Him in His capital, Jerusalem, by His viceroy Solomon. Men looked from their housetops in the city across to the Temple; they hushed their thought as they passed beneath the boundary walls of its outer court—"The King, **Jehovah**, is within there!" And when their sin had cost them the presence of the occupying Shekinah-cloud, the Palace stood still, a witness to the desire of the heart of God to dwell amongst men. [All this is carried out in chap. vi., where see.] The word used is that for the actual Temple building, the Naos or Shrine. Around this lay broad outer courts, the outermost and largest being open to the world, the Court of (even) the Gentiles. It was an ill day for the Church when it added a great outer court, the Court of the World. In a true sense, perhaps, like the Court of the Gentiles, it may be included in the Hieron. The outer Court of the World does stand in a true relation to God. But the ill-day is when the court of the baptized, or unbaptized, world is counted part of the Naos; when the sacred name which belongs to the Shrine only is extended to the outer court, to the great confusion of thought and discipline and practice. "*Ye are the Naos.*" The Church with the "*indwelling*" *of the* "*Spirit of God*" is the present-day embodiment and exhibition of God's Thought. [Not the last; the last but one. The last and most perfect is in Rev. xxi. 3. And in heaven to-day is another, concurrent, exhibition of it, where He sits who is, and will eternally be, the God-man.

(The two are one: Eph. i. 23).] The individual and the collective modifications of Paul's illustrations are combined in 1 Pet. ii. 5. The whole building is instinct with Life, because every single stone is "living." Peter's figure hardly bears, even in a reader's mind, to be put into visible shape. The truth is clear. The Temple is built up of temples. Men whose body is a temple, and they alone, build up the Temple of God. But there is a presence of God which specially belongs to the Church as such.

III. **"Defile" and "destroy" are the same word.**—A *vox media*, for which Evans suggests "mar." Sin, as so often is repaid in kind. It shapes, as well as earns, its own punishment. [In part, a sinner makes his own kind of hell.] The man who does anything in the corporate life of the Church, which is a "grief" and an offence to the Divine Tenant of the Temple of to-day, shall find that he has grieved the Spirit of his personal life. It is the One Spirit of Holiness who everywhere, in church or soul, makes its most grievous penalty His own withdrawal. Let the life of the body depart, and from that moment it begins to be "marred" and "*destroyed*" by disintegrating moral corruption. In this particular instance the "*defiling*" is done by the introduction of party spirit, and by the introduction of the "*wood, hay, stubble*," into the structure, whether of Church order or Christian doctrine, or personal character and life; not to add by the envying and strife which proved the Corinthians "*yet carnal*." Let every man in Corinth watch not only lest he offend against the holiness of his personal Christian life, but be jealous of anything which might impinge upon the corporate holiness of The Church of Christ. Let every Corinthian enrol himself in the honourable Guild of the Temple-guardians [lit. "Temple-sweepers," Acts xix. 35] of the shrine of the great God and His Spirit.

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 21—23.

*Our Estate and our Title: "All things yours."*

I. **Incidental illustration of this in the occasion of the paragraph.**—1. "All things work together for good to them that love God." Corinthian Church a saddening spectacle to an observer, especially to one having Paul's close personal interest in its welfare. Sad even at this distance of time to see the state of things in a Church hardly more than two or three years old, and endowed with gifts—many of them miraculous—beyond any other of that age. Members split into factions, party spirit running high. Some living in immorality "not even named amongst the heathen" around them (v. 1); some defending such sin; others suffering "rationalising" scepticism to sap the foundations of their faith, and, which always follows, to eat away the vitality of their Christian life. One is sick at heart at the meanness and virulence of their personal feeling against Paul, the man to whom they owed their Church existence, who had "*spent himself*" for them, only to find that "*the more he loved them the less he was loved*" (2 Cor. xii. 15). Yet to this condition of things we owe these two letters to Corinth; of all his longer Epistles the most human in their interest, and coming nearest to the every-day life of house, market, citizen, church. 2. Especially do we owe to this the many passages, of which this is a specimen, of greatest weight and importance. How again and again, in the midst of passages of rebuke or direction concerning the temporary and sometimes trivial points submitted by the Corinthians to Paul for his decision, do we find his pen guided to such passages of solemn or glorious truth as, *e.g.*, 1 Cor. vii. 29-31, or as this paragraph. As the casual blow of the pick of the lucky miner strikes upon the precious nugget embedded in the rock of quartz, or as many a fair flower grows so strong and so fair out of, and because of, the very corruption with which its roots are fed; so out of the foolish and wicked party spirit of the Corinthian

Church grows this glorious **title-deed to the Universe** and its contents, the estate of the **Christian. The** very **parties in Corinth are "ours"!** [How is the preacher to put all the estate, "*all things*," into one homily? He and his people can but walk over a part of it, noting the things which lie next the path on either hand, or can be seen afar off in large outline. No matter in what direction they strike out together a path over such an extent of possession, new "views" open on this side and that, new "finds" of pleasure and profit lie close to their way! Before starting across in even one direction, let them look over their Title. "All is God's; all is Christ's, His Son; all He has is yours, His brethren."]

II. **The title by which the estate is held by the Church and the Christian.**—*At each link* in the above chain of successive "conveyance," from God to Christ, from Christ to His people, the ground of possession, *the nature of the ownership, varies.* 1. "Of, through, unto, **God** are all things" (Rom. xi. 36). They have being because He willed it; they are what they are, and as they are, and they continue, at His will. All the creatures, and pre-eminently Man, find in His glory the aim and end of their being. Sin would destroy this order. The germ, not only of heathenism but of all sin, is that "they worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator" (Rom. i. 25). The members of the Church have come again into harmony with the Creator's design, and glory with David as he stood amidst his people's offerings to God's Temple on earth, bowing at our Creator's feet with the homage, "All that is in the heaven," etc. (1 Chron. xxix. 11). All the voices of the universe were meant to be and ought to be in harmony with the cry of the four "living ones" and the four-and-twenty elders who, self-discrowned, bow before the Lord God Almighty in the temple of heaven, saying, "Thou hast created," etc. (Rev. iv. 11). He is Lawgiver to His universe. The "laws" which we laboriously make out, are nothing but expressions of His will, the ordinary, orderly methods according to which He is pleased to govern His great Kingdom. All is His, in virtue of His Creatorship; all is subject to Him; all at His disposal. 2. But there comes in between Him and His Created Universe His Son; between, not as a separation, but as a link; as a Mediator, not only between God and man in Redemption, but as between Creator and Creature in Creation and in Providence (John i. 1; Col. i. 16). Even in the days of His veiled glory He once said: "All things that the Father hath are Mine"; and the writer of the Hebrews (i. 1-3) allows us to see this "Son appointed Heir of all things, . . . sitting down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." And "*all things*" are His, subject to His power and at His disposal. 3. Then comes in the astounding revelation that He is all this, and has all this, for the sake of the redeemed race of man. [Note the force of Heb. i. 3, 4, "Being the brightness, etc., . . . sat down . . . when He, who was *all the while* this, had by Himself purged our sins." The "purging" of our sins and the after-session "on the right hand," etc., are "projected," as it were, on the background of His abiding, continuous dignity as "the Brightness" and "the Image."] Whilst He thus has all things for Himself, He has linked Himself with man, has taken flesh and come down to us, that He might lift us up with Himself to God, and join us with Himself in a possession as wide as His own ownership. The very heart of the argument of Heb. ii. is here. Yonder sits One Man in whom all the dominion of Ps. viii. 4-6, ascribed to man, is actually fulfilled; the only one wearing our nature in whom that dominion is as yet realised. But His enthronement and dominion carry the principle of Man's restored dominion. His royalty is representative as well as personal. His people are so "partakers with Him" that they already enter into a life of rule rather than of subjection, and their ultimate and complete glory is sure. "*Ye are Christ's*" carries with it an answer to the old question, "What is man?" such as was never dreamed of by him who asked it. The

creature physically lost in the vastness of the universe, dwarfed into a point by the heavens, the work of God's fingers, doomed to suffering and to death, in bondage all his life to the fear of death, and in that respect lower than the "*cattle*" and the humbler animated creation (Ps. viii.), is already beginning, so our paragraph says, to realise that along with and like the Representative Man "he is crowned with glory and honour"; all things are put under his feet, and serve him; he is to become conqueror of death; angels are his servitors. Indeed, there is nothing, there is no being, in the whole contents of God's creation-realm, that is not at His orders to serve the interests, and advance to its perfection the life, of those whom Christ has made His clients and His brethren. "He is head over all things *to His Church*" (Eph. i. 22 [a paragraph thoroughly parallel to the thought of our present section]). Each member of His body—of His very Self—may say, "All things that the Son hath are mine." The Lord of all that is or that begins to be, of all that happens in the unfolding of events, of all the forces and contents of the universe in all their capabilities and combinations, is making all ceaselessly contribute to and converge upon the interests of His people and of each single individual of their number. [May illustrate in homely fashion thus: The mere caller at a house is shown into one room; there stays, and only *stays*; takes nothing, uses nothing, of what is in it. The visitor in the family has the use, the "run," of all in common use by the family, and of those set apart specially for him; but he feels that many are closed against him. In a very restricted way does he feel free to use what is at his disposal and service. But the child of the house has the free "run" of the house. Nothing is shut against him; in submission to his father's wishes, all it contains may be called into requisition for his use and comfort and welfare.] The home belongs to the brethren of Christ. The estate is His; but, we may almost venture to say, not its smallest value to Him is that He can make His brethren sharers with Him in its possibilities of blessing.

III. **The estate and its contents of good.**—In a word, "*everything.*" There is nothing in the physical or the spiritual world; in the present, in the future; persons, circumstances, changes of condition,—nothing of which the Christian is not master instead of servant, and which cannot be made to issue in and contribute to the service and advancement of all his best interests. 1. The matter immediately in hand is the ministers and order of the Church: "*Paul, Apollos, Cephas.*" With fervid, slavish, personal devotion the Corinthians were ranging themselves very obediently as the adherents of this man and that. Indeed, they were fiercely contending for their favourite, under whose yoke they were eager to put the neck of their judgment and will and heart, almost as if their party-head had been crucified for them, or they had been baptized into his name and not Christ's. No man contended more stoutly than did Paul (*e.g.* chap. ix.) for his Apostolic rights and all due recognition of his *status*. But the place which some at Corinth would have given to him or to other apostles, was one which belonged to Christ (i. 13). Such exaltation of an apostle into lordship over their own head and heart, was an inversion of the true order. As he looks at the humblest man in Corinth, ennobled by his brotherhood to Christ, he says: "Remember, the apostle is for your sake, not for his own glorification. The Church; its arrangements; its officers and their qualifications, exist for your salvation and sanctification, and not at all for their own advancement or glory. You are not theirs, not mine. Paul, Apollos, Cephas, we are **yours!**" There is no one pattern of "excellence" in the ministry, as there is no one pattern of need or character in the people. Every man is the "excellent" minister to somebody! The expositor of the Word, or the declaimer of theses on the topics of the day; the man who excels in pathos, or in historical word-painting, or in satire and shrewd analysis of character and

its foibles; the man who "cannot preach," and the man who can preach but who cannot organise; the man who is at his best in a sick-room, or that other who is a born ruler of men;—through all their infinite variety of gifts, there is no faithful minister of Christ who is not and has not something which somebody wants, or at some time will want. Each man will have his own aspect of truth to present and teach, the aspect which he sees most clearly, into which he enters most fully; and all are wanted, Paul and James, Cephas and John, Jude and Apollos, to give the whole round of truth. A many-sided, many-gifted ministry is not the smallest part of the wealth and rich heritage of the Church. Let the Christian man see what he can find for himself in each type of man. There is something. Let him not be so wedded to any one type, that he cannot enjoy, or find help from, or even think kindly of, a man who is not after the pattern of his own "best," the style of minister who most helps him. And, similarly, first stands the interest of the individual soul, and next the form of Church organisation and administration. No form is worth anything which never was, or is no longer, of use towards helping those who belong to Christ. Any form, as any man, who does this, is to be recognised and to be utilised as part of the endowment of the people of God. 2. Then Paul's view widens. His words grow broad in their range, even to indefiniteness. "*World* yours! *Life* yours! *Death* yours!" Then "*the world*"—and its predominantly *ethical* and *evil* significance need not be excluded from it—is no mere necessary evil, which must be endured and perhaps survived. There is no "must be" which ordains that *life*, with its business, its sorrows, its trials and conflicts, its unfriendly or uncongenial men and women, its strange perplexities and obstacles of circumstance, shall be of necessity a hindrance to growth in grace; putting the break on, even if it cannot quite stop all progress, as if a Christian could not hope to be thorough in service or enjoyment so long as life in "*the world*" lasts, and as if the one thing most to be desired was to "shuffle off this mortal coil" and be done with it all. Paul's words in our paragraph say rather: "You are not to succumb beneath life's burdens like that. You are not to acquiesce in a low type of spiritual life, because your circumstances and whole location in the world are not favourable to growth. The world is not to be master like that. Evil as it is, its evil is under the rule of your Christ. 'God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly' (Rom. xvi. 20), and you may begin to enter into your victory and have your foot even now upon the power of evil; and then all the good there is in life and in the world may be set in motion and utilised for your enjoyment and help. The trials, the difficulties, the very temptations, are not to be met simply as the bulrush bows its head before the storm, praying that the storm may soon be over, and that you may not be uprooted utterly by its passing violence. Rather, like your Master, *ride* the storm, in His strength. Every hurricane obeys laws—His laws—and blows as He listeth, towards His goal and for His purpose towards you. The water outside will carry the well-found ship; admitted within, it will sink it. Keep the world outside your heart, and the world is yours, to use and rule and lay under contribution to your growth in grace." Trials may teach. Crosses may lift nearer. ["*Even so*," and in no other way, "*must*" every "*son of man be lifted up!*"] The very necessity of the strife and of unremitting watchfulness against evil will drive a man so often and so near to Christ his Source of strength, that he emerges from every specially severe testing-time with new knowledge and a new power in prayer. The very weight of life's burdens will have forced him to find a Friend in Christ, whose strength and faithfulness the world has forced him to test and experience, as he would never otherwise have had occasion to do. He is a fine specimen of manhood, who has taken his place in the world, and felt its storm, and fought it when it

assailed him, and after all is not hardened or "secularised" or soured, but is trained to patience and sympathy with others, and to a more perfect reliance upon his God. The fire will brighten and purify what it cannot burn. In "*the world*" it is true that the soldier is in an unfriendly country; but even the enemy's country can be requisitioned for what will enable him to carry on the campaign. [The darkest days of life have often been the most fruitful in permanent advancement to the soul. The cross has had a jewel hidden beneath it which has repaid for lifting the cross. A true parable in a **German Legend**: A famous egg of iron was given by a prince to his bride, who flung down in displeasure so unworthy a gift. The concussion started a spring in the iron case, and revealed a silver "white" to the egg. Curiosity examined this, and found again within a "yolk" of gold. In this lay hidden a tiny ruby-set crown, whose circlet concealed a marriage-ring for the union of bridegroom and bride! So, at the very heart of the most forbidding experiences of "*the world*" and "*life*," the soul has many a time found the pledge of new love and a closer union with the Christ who rules "*the world*" and "*life*," and who gave the painful and hard experience, etc.] 3. Nothing seems more utterly master than "*Death*." The natural heart often stoically looked life in the face and defied it; or sometimes sullenly, doggedly, went onward to meet its changing fortunes and crushing sorrows as the Inevitable. But reckon death a possession, part of one's wealth? No; it must be submitted to! In all literature, except what is Christian, or at least Christianised, Death is the great Conqueror; knocking impartially at the door of palace and hovel, calling as imperiously the king from his throne as the beggar from his rags and wretchedness, and calling them at his own caprice; playing havoc with all men's plans and work, breaking these off at most unlooked-for and unfortunate times; mocking the tears of affection over sundered bonds; defying all efforts to arrest his progress or stay his hand. On the contrary, they who are Christ's see that He has conquered death, and they share in His victory. They already "*have* everlasting life." Death has become *dying* only, simply an incident—no more—in the course of an "eternal life" which began when faith united to Christ, and which stretches on in victorious continuity through the important, but still accidental, change of surroundings and abode and conditions which dissolution occasions. They do not tremble at any *capricious* shooting of His arrows. The Lord of Life makes every arrow of Death to carry His message attached to it. He "has the keys of Hell and of Death" (Rev. i. 17). The realm of the "departed" is part of His dominion. His people enter it as possessors, not as prisoners. They are only advancing into another section of a *life* which is all theirs. Its doors are opened by Death when He wills, and at His bidding. And so far from putting an abrupt and inopportune end to the execution of their life's purposes, or thwarting them, they are only by death advanced a stage nearer to their completion. Salvation is put out of peril; for the first time do the majority of His people then see their Lord. To wake up into the blessedness of that first moment, when their eyes at last see the Christ they have heard of, and trusted, and loved, and have tried to serve—Death which brings that is no dread, no enemy; it is a hope, it is *their own*. 4. Nor does anything seem less their own than the future. "*Things to come*" may unfold in such terrible possibilities, and may involve such unforeseen contingencies, as may set at nought all their wisest planning and blight all their brightest prospects. No dawn so clear but the noonday may be shadowed over with clouds which never lift again long as life's day lasts. Men seem working life's problem with a quantity unknown, incommensurable, when they must needs take the future into their reckoning. Masters of the future? No, not even its prophets! Rather its sport! "*Things to come are yours.*" What these shall be, He is deciding. They lie within the domain which is being

ruled by the Son, and ruled by Him for His Church and for the individual Christian man. Even here He used to speak of the unseen world and its facts as one to whose foot the other side of the veil was as familiar ground as this side is to us. In like manner the future lies mapped out to His eye as clearly as, more clearly than, the past is to ours. For instance, some man will one day cross my path who will materially affect my whole after-life. Christ, the Ruler of the future, has His eye upon the point of convergence; and upon the path which that man, perhaps as yet altogether unknown to me, or far from me, in perhaps another hemisphere, is traversing, and which will bring him to the meeting-point by-and-by. When the moment arrives there is the man, just when, and just such as, my life needs. The present is being so guided into the future, and the future is being so fitted on to the present, as that the life of a man who is Christ's, is in its whole stretch and extent one perfect harmonious whole (see Homily on 2 Cor. i. 10). Somewhere in the whole round of His universal possession there is the very help and deliverance he will someday want; it will be brought out and forthcoming at the proper time, "in *His* times" (cf. 1 Tim. vi. 15). As each stage of the earthly series of "*things to come*" is reached, relays of help [like the relays of fresh horses awaiting the travellers at each successive posting-station in the old "posting" days] will always be awaiting him. "My times are in" Christ's "hand."

## *HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS FOR A COURSE ON VERSE* 22.

*The World is Yours.*

I. To lodge in.
II. To study.
III. To use.
IV. To enjoy.
V. To conquer.—[*J. L.*]

*Life is Yours.*

I. As a daily gift of God.
II. As a period of discipline and instruction.
III. As a season of enjoyment.
IV. As an earnest of a more glorious life.—[*J. L.*]

*Death is Yours.*

I. To consider.
II. To terminate your sorrows.
III. To effect an important change.
IV. To unfold the mysteries of eternity.
V. To introduce you to eternal happiness.—[*J. L.*]

*Things Present are Yours.*

I. The dispensations of providence.
II. The provisions and arrangements of the Gospel.
III. All the supplies, agencies, and experiences of time.—[*J. L.*]

*Things to Come are Yours.*

I. The future of time.
II. The coming of Christ.
III. The resurrection of the body.
IV. The day of judgment.
V. Heaven.
VI. Everlasting life.
VII. God, who was, and is, and *is to come*.—[*J. L.*]

## *APPENDED NOTES.*

Ver. 11 *sqq.* Since it was by preaching and teaching that Paul laid the foundation of the Church of Corinth, the builders must be different kinds of teachers. Since the matter taught is the material the teacher uses, this must be the gold, silver, wood, straw, etc. The results produced by the teacher in the hearts and lives of his hearer are the building he erects. He may produce good results which will last for ever and be to him an eternal joy and glory. Since these results are altogether the work of God, and are revealed in their grandeur only in the great day, they are a "reward" given by God in that day for work done on earth. But a teacher may produce results which now appear great and substantial, but which will then be found utterly worthless. He may gather round him a large number of hearers, may interest them, and teach them much that is elegant and

for this life useful, and yet fail to produce in or through them results which will abide for ever. If so, the great day will destroy his work and proclaim its worthlessness. But he may be said to build upon the one foundation, Jesus Christ. For he is a professed Christian teacher, and people go to hear him as such. He may be a sincere, though mistaken Christian believer, and therefore be himself saved. But his work, as a teacher, is a failure. Now the permanence of a teacher's work depends upon the matter taught. The soul-saving truths of the Gospel enter into men's hearts and lives, and produce abiding results. All other teaching will produce only temporary results. We understand, therefore, by the wood and straw whatever teaching does not impart or nourish spiritual life. The three terms suggest the various kinds of such teaching. It may be clever or foolish, new or old, true or false; but not subversive of the "foundation," or it would come under the severer censure of ver. 16 *sq.* . . . We have Christian examples in many of the trifling and speculative discussions which have been frequent in all ages. We also learn that even of the teaching which produces abiding results there are different degrees of worth; in proportion, no doubt, to the fulness and purity with which the teaching of Christ is reproduced. In both cases the results are the results, lasting or transitory, produced in the hearers' hearts by the use of these materials; results which are in some sense a standing embodiment of the teaching.—*Dr. Beet.*

"*By Fire.*"—1. It may be homiletically useful to cast into orderly shape the Bible use of "Fire." Needless to say that the Bible is not pledged to any such unscientific piece of obsolete antiquity as that Fire is an Element—one of four. It is content to take the visible fact, and its palpable effects, as a serviceable illustration, apprehended readily by the child or the heathen, and perfectly good as an illustration, whatever be the scientific revision of our knowledge of the state of the case. For teaching purposes Fire is Heat and, still more, Flame. Flame is now understood to be gas so highly heated as to become in some degree luminous, and generally made more luminous by being loaded with incandescent particles, whether of carbon or other matter. That is nothing new to the Divine Author of Scripture and of Nature; nor was it unworthy of Him, or untrue, that what was to be the popularly apprehensible phenomenon should in the original planning of Nature be so adjusted and adapted as to lend itself well to teach moral truth. Indeed, the devout students of Nature find that both the superficial, phenomenal facts and the deep scientific "laws" are alike parabolic and didactic. Nature is full of man, and of truth which man wants. Creation is didactic. "Creation is redemptive."

2. A convenient starting-point is Heb. xii. 29: "Our God is a consuming fire." Closely connected with "God is Light." The difference is here: Light is what God is in Himself; fire what He is in relation to (sinful) mankind. Hence frequently *the chosen symbol of His self-manifestation*: the Bush, Exod. iii. 2; the Pillar, Exod. xl. 38; Tongues of Pentecost, Acts ii. 3; Sinai, Exod. xix. 8, xxiv. 17, Deut. iv. 36; Vision of God's glory, Ezek. i. 4, Exod. xxiv. 9-11 (N.B. Nadab and Abihu), Dan. vii. 9, Rev. iv. 2. In Isa. iv. 5 we have three manifesting symbols of God combined —*light, radiant splendour, burning fire.* Still more frequently *the accompaniment* of His self-manifestation: *e.g.* "After the earthquake a fire," 1 Kings xix. 24; "fire goeth before Him," Ps. xcvii. 8. *Loosely connected with all this* are the fiery Chariot and Horses sent for Elijah, 2 Kings ii. 11; fiery Chariots round about Elisha, 2 Kings vi. 17. This last and the Pillar over Israel, or the Shekinah in its midst, are gathered up in Zech. ii. 5.

3. Hence when *He accepted*, "took," "ate," appropriated, *a sacrifice*, it was *by a fiery manifestation. E.g.* at the Ordination of Aaron and the Inauguration of the priestly system and ritual, Lev. ix. 24. So at the Dedication of Solomon's Temple, 2 Chron. vii. 1-3. And in less important instances: Carmel, 1 Kings xviii.; on Araunah's threshing floor, 1 Chron. xxi. 26; Gideon's sacrifice, Judg. vi. 21. The Burnt Offering, as distinguished from the Sin and Peace Offerings, and as symbol of *an entire surrender* on man's part and *an entire appropriation* on God's part, was (as its name says) burnt with fire. And this links on the foregoing to the twofold employment of the symbol as exhibiting the *active* relation of a Holy God to sinful man.

4. All that could, so to say, be volatilised went up purified and in perfect acceptance; all that was gross and earthly was left behind, to be cast out. Hence, "Baptized with . . . fire," Matt. iii. 11. Mal. iii. 2 brings out the action of the refiner's fire upon metals. So Isa. iv. 4, "Purged Jerusalem by the Spirit of Judgment and the Spirit of Burning"; "in that day," primarily the return of a purified remnant from Babylon, then the setting up of a Christian Zion, perhaps, by-and-by, a restored and purified Israel once more. Isa. xxx. 23, and more remotely still Isa. xxix. 6, perhaps may better come in later on. The same Holiness which is purifying to the man who desires to be purified, burns as a consuming fire against sin and the sinner who will not be parted from his sin. Hence fire frequently sets forth the holy, active antagonism to evil and

evil men, *in defence* of His people. Isa. xxx. 27, "His tongue a devouring fire; lips full of indignation." "Fury like a fire," Jer. iv. 4 (against unfaithful Judah and Jerusalem), xxi. 2. So it proved, Lam. iii. 3. So against the heathen and Idumæa, Ezek. xxxvi. 5; against Gog, xxxviii. 18, 19. [Ps. lxxxiii. 14, cxl. 10; Ezek. xxiv. 9; Amos v. 6.] God and *His people* are so identified that they *become a fire too*, Obad. 18; Zech. xii. 6. So in Isa. xxx. 27-33 we have it again. Fire purging the faithful from the unfaithful, sifting the nations, then burning up the pile of Tophet. [But "the King" may (as Talmud) be the Eternal King, and Tophet the burning-place outside the purified, ideal Jerusalem, where all the refuse is to be cast (Matt. xiii. 50).] Certainly the twofold action is seen in Isa. xxxi. 9, "Fire in Zion; furnace in Jerusalem"; xxxiii. 14. As the Assyrian invasion approached, and the denunciations of holy wrath against sinners in and enemies of Zion, "sinners in Zion are afraid." "Who can dwell with devouring fire?" cry they, ". . . with everlasting burnings?" *i.e.* with a God whose holy antagonism to sin never relaxes, never spares, never ends. Ver. 15 is the answer. But the principle is here which has occasioned and justified a very frequent use made of this text. God's fierce, fiery antagonism to sin cannot cease unless sin cease—must last everlastingly if sinners live on everlastingly sinners still. Same connection appears in Nah. i. 6. Indeed, the whole cycle of events connected with the Assyrian invasion seems the foundation of much Bible language concerning the punishment of wicked. Not only such as Ps. xlvi. 9 (usually [not in *Speaker*] connected with these events), but Isa. ix. 5, bring up the fires with which the dead bodies and the wreck of the host were cleared away (ix. 5 = no fighting, no blood, but simply burning of the litter and refuse and the dead), with, by the usual analogy, a future fulfilment. Isa. lxvi. 24 (foundation of Mark ix. 44-46 [cf. Stier, *Words of L. J.*, i. 156]; rather the figure of a holy Jerusalem with its Gehenna, its burning-place for all the refuse of the city [Matt. xiii. 50]); here also the fires on the battle-field after Sennacherib's defeat are evidently in the mind of the writer. The battle-field is one vast Gehinnom outside the city walls.

5. *Many actual examples* of God's vengeance in which fire is the agent of punishment. N.B. these are all examples of sins very directly against His holiness and unique position and claims. Nadab and Abihu, Lev. x. 2; Taberah, Num. xi. 2; Achan, Josh. vii. 25; Korah, Num. xvi. 35; Elijah and the captains, 2 Kings i. 10 (unless, indeed, this be, first and chiefly, God's manifestation of Himself, appealing both to Elijah and to the witnesses and hearers of the event). *Above all Sodom*, Gen. xix. 24; referred to in Luke xvii. 29; and at least shaping the language of Ps. xi. 6, Ezek. xxxviii. 22, Rev. xxi. 18. [Imagery of Mal. iv. 1-2 is anticipated by Gen. xix. 24, 23.]

6. So, coming to the *New Testament*, we find *three great* cycles of type: (*a*) **Sodom**, (*b*) **Gehinnom**, (*c*) **Assyrian invasion**.

NEW TESTAMENT.

1. *General.*—God's vengeance against sin is fiery, Matt. iii. 10 (? primarily the Jewish nation), "Tree hewn down and cast into the fire"; Heb. vi. 8, the doom of the persistently barren ground. Also of individuals, Matt. vii. 19, Luke iii. 9; Heb. x. 27, "Judgment and fiery indignation; 2 Thess. i. 8, "In flaming fire taking vengeance."

2. *God's holiness is testing.*—1 Cor. iii. 13 [though there is here very little of all this typology; hardly more than the commonly observed action of fire]; 2 Pet. iii. 7 (Luke xii. 49-52 is connected).

3. *Sodom.*—Jude 7, "Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." Rev. xix. 20 xx. 10, "Lake of fire and brimstone, where the Beast and the False Prophet are" [Rev. xviii. 9, Babylon; cf. Abraham beholding the ascending smoke of Sodom]; the Devil; Gog and Magog deceived by him (obvious ref. to Ezek. xxxviii. 22); whosoever "not found written in the book of life." Rev. xiv. 10, worshippers of the beast and his image, who have received his mark.

4. *Gehenna.*—Matt. xviii. 9, "Worm dieth not," etc.; Mark ix. 44-46, referring to Isa. lxvi. "Furnace of fire," Matt. xiii. 42, 50, where the latter verse, having nothing in the parable connected with it to suggest it—the fish are cast *into the water*—shows that the phrase had become, or was now first made by Christ, a customary equivalent for the doom of the wicked.

5. *The battle-field.*—Linked with Mark ix., as above, but originating the phrase "everlasting burnings." In Matt. xxv. 41; figure (almost ?) lost. So completely the revelation of the future that we must say: "Whatever be the nature of the punishment of a lost, embodied spirit, if we might ask him what he suffered, he would say, 'Fire,' as the only earthly analogy available."

6. Mark ix. 47. A difficult verse. Every man shall—must—come into contact with the holiness of God. Will a man let it (Him) burn away all impurity, and himself thus become a sacrifice salted with grace, and so accepted? Or, refusing this, will he simply meet and feel the fire which never burns itself out?

Vers. 16, 17. There were Hebrew converts in Corinth, and such would easily catch St. Paul's allusion . . . to the national Temple. This national Temple in the Apostle's mind clearly

enlarges and transfigures itself into a Temple spiritual. This living Temple of the Catholic Church is one Temple; it is one, yet elastic; it *grows* and expands, associating to itself and assimilating, so to speak, many lateral chapels. It is, in fact, an organic unity of several organs, each it itself a unity; it is, in brief, a unity of many contained unities. Each several Church, therefore, of the Catholic Church is the Catholic Church in miniature, so that of the whole all the several parts are themselves wholes; each branch of the Tree is a tree planted in Christ.—*Evans, in "Speaker."*

## CHAPTER IV.

### *CRITICAL NOTES.*

Ver. 1. **So.**—Choose between (*a*) a forward reference to "*as*" (*e.g.* with Stanley), and (*b*) a backward reference (with, *e.g.*, Evans, in *Speaker*, and Beet) to iii. 21, 22; meaning: "Let a man account of us as Christ's servants, having moreover the greater thought also present in his thinking, and governing his estimate of us, that we are thus the house stewards in Christ's household for the very purpose of dispensing to him and his brethren these '*all things*' which belong to him, because he belongs to Christ." **Servants.**—Good note in Trench, *Syn.*, § ix., on the four New Testament words for "servant." See διάκονος and δοῦλος together in Matt. xx. 26-28. [Matt. xxii. 2-14, where Trench points out that the "servants" who bring in the guests are *men*, and can be δοῦλοι, but the executioners of the sentence of the Host are *angels*, who are only διάκονοι.] See δοῦλος and ὑπηρέτης (the word here) together in John xviii. 18. The δοῦλος [slave, bondservant] is *bound* to a person; the θεράπων does some service to a *person*, whether as his slave or a freeman, whether for the once, or frequently and customarily; the διάκονος is a man charged with a special *task*, and to the task, rather than to the person who enjoins it, the word points; the ὑπηρέτης is, so to speak, an attendant charged with the duty of *an office*. Our word may be studied in Acts xiii. 5; Matt. v. 25; Luke iv. 20; John vii. 32, xviii. 18; Acts v. 22. Must not overpress the derivational sense—the "*under-rower in a galley*"; the ship being the Church, Christ sitting at the helm, the passengers being the members of the Church. **Stewards.**—Might be *slaves*, though in positions of important trust. Joseph, *e.g.* was so. Here the thought is only that their business is to administer the household of their Master, and particularly to deal out the stores of soul-feeding "mysteries" to their fellow-servants of other offices and orders (Tit. i. 7; well expounded in 1 Pet. iv. 1, and 1 Cor. ii. 1; Eph. iii. 2). For "*mysteries*," see ii. 1; certainly not the *sacramenta*, which word in ecclesiastical Latin, through the Vulgate, has become the equivalent of "*mysteries*."

Ver. 2.—Notice "*here*," by a change of reading. Stanley (alone) joins the word with the preceding sentence. A maxim true of all stewardships in ordinary human affairs.

Ver. 3. **Judge.**—*Examine*, as if dealing with a man on his defence in a court of justice. So ix. 3. **Judgment.**—Lit. "*day*"; parallel to the "*day*" of God's judgment in iii. 13. (See Separate Homily on that passage for general treatment of the subject.)

Ver. 4. **Know nothing by myself.**—Not at all to be taken as: "I have no knowledge of Divine things but such as is a gift of the grace of God." Simply a piece of old-fashioned English, still lingering in the provincialisms of some counties. A Lincolnshire peasant, *e.g.*, will say, "What do you think *by* it?" instead of "think *of* it," or "think *about* it." Paul only means, of course, "I am not conscious to myself of anything." He does not say "*evil*"; that is so generally, however, the issue of any examination and judgment of oneself that almost of necessity it is suggested by his language. Cf. 1 John iii. 20. **The Lord.**—Paul's largely predominant usage makes this almost certainly "*Christ*." This is confirmed by ver. 5. It is always Christ who "comes," and who will act as Judge. Yet ultimately, and supremely, though the judgment and sentence is Christ's, the reward is "*God's praise*." Note "*his praise*" (giving the force of the article) in R.V.

Ver. 6.—From iii. 5 he has discussed what applied to all the factions and their leaders, and even more to the others than to the so-called Pauline and Apollonian factions, in connection with himself and Apollos alone. "*For their sakes*" he has done so, to avoid arousing personal feeling or giving avoidable pain, content if, "*in* himself and Apollos" as sample cases, the question might be more calmly discussed and its conclusion more dispassionately arrived at. And the one lesson emerging from the discussion is, *Not to think of themselves*, or of teachers they were tempted to idolise, without taking account of *what is written* in such Scriptures as, *e.g.*, he had quoted in i. 19, 31, iii. 19; and therefore not to be, in any overween-

ing conceit of themselves or their own judgment, such strong partisans *for one* teacher as *against another* teacher. **Puffed up.**—Vers. 18, 19, v. 2; viii. 1, xiii. 4.

Ver. 7.—Transition to the *self*-esteem which really underlay their *party* zeal for this or that leader. **Who?**—Certainly not yourself, nor the man to whom you attach yourself.

Ver. 8.—Note the tenses in R.V. Sharply—not bitterly, but sadly—ironical. As if the Master's "*judgment*" (ver. 4) were over, the rewards distributed, and they were already on their thrones (Luke xxii. 29, 30; Rev. iii. 21, i. 6, v. 10). *Apart from* Paul and Apollos! And yet to them, if to anybody, the Corinthian Church owed its very existence (iii. 6). "Would that the day for your thrones had really come! *We* should then be on our thrones too, and all this weary life of labour, suffering, obloquy, would be done with! But it is not done with yet!"

Ver. 9.—The *last* batch of criminals doomed (say) to the lions, kept back as the climax of the show in the amphitheatre, where the Corinthians sit in comfort and royal state as spectators. As to the *angel* spectators, see Eph. iii. 10. The whole story of God's revelation in Christ had been through the ages unfolding itself before the eagerly interested gaze of the watching, studying "principalities and powers in heavenly places." Paul's career was a small incident in the history which was being wrought out under their eyes; and they studied him and his fortunes, like everything else, with closest attention. [Like his Master, he was "seen of angels." Cf. "set forth," Rom. iii. 25, as if uplifted and exhibited upon the cross, "*appointed to death*," to the gaze of heaven, and earth, and (perhaps) hell.] **Apostles.**—Whole reference is so vague, whilst mainly starting from himself and his career, that this does not necessarily include Apollos, or make him "an apostle." Paul is "numbering himself with the eleven apostles." (See also ix. 1.)

Ver. 10.—Note the ascending climax. All ironical, except that perhaps "*Ye are wise in Christ*" may not only be "You think you are," but also "You really are; and do not forget that you owe that indirectly to us who by the derided 'message of the Cross'—'such *folly*!'—led you to Christ." (The "folly," i. 18, 21, 23; ii. 1-5. Their very real "wisdom," i. 5.)

Ver. 11. **This present hour.**—Paul in Ephesus was still sustaining himself by manual labour (Acts xx. 33, 34), which often left him (as it did in Corinth, 2 Cor. xi. 9) in real want. **We.**—True of *apostles in general*. Yet these, and Paul pre-eminently, were, of all men then living, of greatest worth to and importance for the world's interests and life. They were the little lump of leaven with which God was revolutionising the world! What a picture of Apostolic life is suggested! **Naked.**—Insufficiently clad (cf. 2 Tim. iv. 13). **Buffeted.**—His Master was, literally (Matt. xxvi. 67); perhaps he himself may have been (2 Cor. xi. 7-12 [1 Pet. ii. 20; 2 Cor. xii. 7]). **No . . . dwelling-place.**—Partakers with Christ again (Matt. viii. 20), and with the Old Testament saints (Heb. xi. 37). "A peculiar grief in the ancient world" (Stanley).

Ver. 12.—"We use only the Christian weapons of resistance" (Matt. v. 44; Luke xxvii.). Paul's is "the earliest instance of such language being used" (Stanley).

Ver. 13. **Entreat.**—Usually men who have been in the wrong do this, and who deprecate punishment. Or perhaps, more generally, "We give good words back in exchange for calumny." **Offscouring.**—*E.g.* Acts xxii. 22. [So they cried of his Lord, "Away with Him!"] Not only did Israel cast him out, but the very Corinthians seemed to have less than no esteem for him; and the world outside, of course, counted him as vile and offensive. There seems to be some evidence that at Athens human sacrifices were cast into the sea as offerings to Neptune, with the words, "Be thou our 'offscouring'" [the same word as the second here]; as procuring "salvation" or "redemption" in times of famine or plague.

Ver. 14.—Irony dropped. Even in ver. 6 it was "Brothers!" Now, "Beloved children!" Yet surely he did desire to make them ashamed of their bearing towards and estimate of himself? Yes. But not vindictively, nor so as to humiliate them before others. It was only such *fatherly* use of "*shame*," as if in private between him and his erring children, as is really a most effectual "*admonition*" and educating force.

Ver. 15. **Instructors.**—More accurately "*tutors*"; an illustration of his in Gal. iii. 24, 25, with a different application. The *slaves* to whom the boy was intrusted during his school-life and minority, to look after him generally. [As the Master says, "I am the Shepherd to whom the sheep *belong*; others are but 'hirelings.'" However faithful servants they may be, the sheep are "*not their own*."] (Stanley thinks of the (often) "harsh and despotic sway" of these pedagogues, and compares 2 Cor. xi. 20.) **I begat you.**—Not claiming any larger share in the origin of their spiritual life than in Gal. iv. 19; Philem. 10; Phil. ii. 22; 1 Tim. i. 2, 18. All he had done was "*in Christ Jesus*"; no independent work or glory. "An approach to the doctrine of the new birth. . . . Paul's only direct reference to this doctrine is Tit. iii. 5" (Beet). [Jas. i. 18 approaches Paul's "*through the Gospel*" here.]

Ver. 16. **Followers.**—"*Imitators*," as in Phil. iii. 17; 1 Thess. i. 6, which again joins on to Eph. v. 1. Says Pressensé: "Paul has attained to such a stripping off of self that he can without egotism propose himself as a model."

Ver. 17.—To his "*beloved children*" he sends *his* "*beloved child.*" [As the Great Householder sent His Son to the unfaithful, rebellious husbandmen, Matt. xxi. 35.] As in xvi. 10, there is the always recurrent strain of appeal for a kindly reception of Timothy. **For this cause.**—*I.e.* in order that you may *imitate* me. Timothy will remind you of "*my ways in Christ.*"

Vers. 18, 19.—"Timothy instead of himself! He dares not come himself! Or, at best, he does not know his own mind, or stick to his purpose long together!" Cf 2 Cor. i. 15-17. Thus would *revive* suspicions of vacillation or duplicity already awakened. Note the tense, which is exactly, "*Some got puffed up,*" previously. **The Lord.**—Most probably Christ, as in vers. 4, 5.

Ver. 20. **Word . . . power.**—Be ye prepared to match with *facta non verba* my own coming with *facta non verba* (cf. i. 18). [How irresistible Stephen was (Acts vi. 10). Cf. Acts viii. 6, x. 44, xvii. 11, 12, xix. 20, xiv. 1. If the preacher stands firing, and never hits anything or anybody, he must aim badly, or must have got the wrong sort of ammunition. The Truth, the Kingdom, are always "*in power.*"]

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS—Verses* 1—5.

*Theme: Judgment.*

**I. The minister's own judgment of himself.**
**II. Other men's judgment of him.**
**III. The master's judgment.**

I. The preceding sentences of the letter (chap. iii. 18-23) have been concerned with the Corinthian habit of over-valuing themselves, and with the party idolatry of their (eponymic) leaders. As for Paul he wishes neither to be over-estimated nor to be under-estimated. [There is no virtue in under-valuation of oneself; such over-depreciation is not infrequently not humility at all, but pride—a subtle pride which is hungry to be told that it is too humble and that the self-asserted value is too low. For the sake of the Master's work, a man may well desire to know what he is worth, and what he is fit for, and to what he is adequate.] Paul would be judged "according to truth" (Rom. ii. 2). To what court shall he go for Justice and for Truth? To the court of Conscience, perpetually "sitting" within his own spirit? This has its value, and its supporting power to him, as he avows (2 Cor. i. 17, where see). A man walking in the favour of God, his spirit continually illumined with the light of the Spirit of God, may know himself. He will guard against self-deception. The grace which is in him will keep him awake to the danger of such self-deception. And whilst there will always be ministers [and workers of every order] whose danger will be an undue, morbid self-depreciation and self-condemnation; just as there will also always be those whose danger lies quite at the opposite pole; in many more the healthy conscience will give them the sustaining force of the knowledge that their aim is as right as they know how to keep it, and their discharge of duty faithful, at any rate up to the measure of their ability and knowledge. Woe to the man who goes about his work without the approval of even his own conscience! Who is unfaithful, and knows that he is! Man's judgment may not condemn him. He may hit exactly the taste, he may meet exactly the desire, of those to whom he ministers; he may give them exactly the only teaching they will welcome, and do neither less nor more in his ruling of the flock than is agreeable to the sheep; he may be personally popular, therefore; he may have the applause of the public as a "successful man," the pastor of "a successful Church." Yet, if all the while the Spirit of God will not suffer him to approve himself, but will keep his sense of right so far alive that not only can he not forget the meaning of the ministry as a "stewardship," or the high ideal of faithfulness to God with which he began his work, but that a voice and verdict within him will ever persistently condemn, he is of all men

most miserable. Wretched he who cannot even stand the judgment of himself upon himself.

II. It were folly to pretend to be literally indifferent to the judgment of others. Sometimes, when a conscience has been lulled, or drugged to sleep, or silenced by long neglect; when a man without the guard, or the goad, within him has sunk, not only far beneath the Master's standard of requirement as to faithfulness in His stewards, but even beneath what was once his own; then the rebuke and condemnation of outsiders may do the man a service. It may make for him an objective conscience, and compel him to hear again from others what he used to hear from himself. He has broken or made dull the mirror within him; then the condemnation of "*man's judgment*" may confront him with his own image in the mirror of Truth in their hand. It would be both foolish and false to pretend to be indifferent to the good opinion of others. If the faithfulness of the steward chance to secure the approval and esteem of other men, he will take it as a grace and a gift from his Lord, to be used, in its turn, like any and every other gift, for the advantage of his Lord's work. The goodwill and esteem of his people are a help to the minister towards doing the people good. Wise and loving fidelity may accomplish something—it must—even where its sharp rebuke or unwelcome dealing puts a strain upon the pleasant relationships between man and man; it will not utterly fail to do good, even when it does its work in the face of indifference or dislike. But where goodwill and affection, and a true estimate of the meaning of the minister's work and office, prepare for, and co-operate with, his fidelity, there it will "have free course." The design of the whole Divine ordinance of "*stewardships*" for the dispensing of "*the mysteries of God*" will be then most perfectly fulfilled. However indifferent Paul may have been to the judgment of men, his sympathetic, affectionate nature prized highly the love of those for whom he "spent himself" even to the "spending" of himself "out" (2 Cor. xii. 15).

III. Yet none of these "courts" is that of Final Appeal. No absolute and unchallengeable acquittal [or condemnation] can be given even from the bench where Judge Conscience sits, and still less from that other tribunal where "*Man*" holds the "*day*" of his assize. Says Paul: "I desire greatly the approval of my own conscience; I believe I have it; as to my stewardship and my fidelity as a steward, I cannot charge myself with any wrong. I do not forget a legitimate regard for the 'manifestation of myself in your consciences' (2 Cor. v. 11). As a matter of fact, I know that many of you do not give me a very approving verdict. Yet I dare not trim my sails to catch the breeze of your applause. I hold it, indeed, a matter of the smallest moment that you should approve or condemn, in comparison of the one greater, final, absolutely true and just verdict of the Lord." Man is so often to himself a problem utterly perplexing, that he knows not how to hold a just balance in his estimate of himself; he fears to approve too easily, he fears to acquit too readily, whilst, rightly enough, he does not desire to harass himself by condemning without reason. A Christian man is so conscious of the blinding effect of a biassed heart upon the clear vision of his judgment, that even if in the court within he be held clear, he will still report the verdict to the Higher Judge for His endorsement or revision. A faithful, honest worker will be so sensitive to the ensnaring power of too nice a consideration of man's favour or man's frown; he will be so conscious of the deflecting power of an anxiety what man will think or say or do, upon the compass-needle of his conscience; that he will never trust the steering of his course to anything lower than the judgment of his Lord. Up above earthly influences and bias, stable amidst all the revolutions and vagaries of man's opinions and judgments, there it shows, the Divine Pole Star of his direction. He will not disregard, as we have seen, the commendation of his fellows, but he

will not "lay himself out" to win it. If they give him condemnation, then he "will appeal unto" the Greater than Cæsar. Against man's judgment, and from man's "day"; whatever also be the judgment of his conscience in its "day" of inquiry and sentence; the matter is carried up to the Great Judge and forward to His "day" and its "Great Assize." For that, amongst other reasons, do Christ's people "love His appearing" (2 Tim. iv. 1, 8). It was said of Dr. Pusey that the deepest note of thankfulness in all his Te Deum was this, "We believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge. . . . We praise Thee, O Christ!" In that day all the clamour and conflict of the varying and uncertain verdicts of man will be hushed into silence, whilst He speaks. Even now it is no small comfort to a true-hearted "steward" to remember that He knows all about him and his work. All that under-life of motive and aim, which works its way to the surface and becomes obnoxious to man's judgment, only after struggling, as it were, through an overlying medium of imperfect knowledge and of many another limiting disability, is always, and altogether, in His clear view. It may be that He knows the man even better that the man knows himself; that He may judge him now and again more favourably than he judges himself. In any case, He will always be profoundly reasonable in what He expects from the "*steward of the mysteries*"; no prejudice, or favour, with Him; profoundly reasonable, and utterly and simply just. "Let me"—for the sentence as well as for its execution—"fall into the hands of," not "man," but "Christ." Moreover, the full and final verdict can only be pronounced when the coming of the "Day of the Lord" shall have completed the facts and evidence on which it most justly rest. So, then, Paul will pronounce no final verdict upon his own fidelity in the discharge of his office. "Let it stand over until He comes." The passing, temporary, human judgment may well go for little with him in the expectation of that other judgment. Indeed, he suggests not obscurely that his opponents and detractors at Corinth may have more reason for apprehension in view of it than he has. When "hidden things of darkness and the counsels of the hearts are dragged forth," some men, some apostles, may "have praise of God," but some may have—— [How nearly without exception are all our judgments of men and conduct judgments before the right time! How often have even the lapse of a few years or months and the addition of even a single new fact caused an entire revision of some unfavourable judgment on men and actions, till we have stood ashamed at the bar of our own conscience that we judged so hastily, on such imperfect *data*, and so harshly, and perhaps gave in our words or bearing such unfair and unchristian effect to our hasty prejudice! "Wait till the Lord comes!" "Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the Judge standeth at the door" (Jas. v. 9). How often a little more knowledge has shown us that the very confident verdicts of our "righteous" indignation were after all at the best wasted words, and at the worst were so hasty and uncharitable, as to have been sins against the Spirit of Christ! "*Therefore judge nothing before the time.*"] And how precious and glorious a compensation for all the unfair, hasty, or even evil-hearted judgments of men will be His praise! In a moment, all the past swallowed up and forgotten, all the pain gone, all the temporary disadvantages past. Nor is it anything but a laudable motive that a man should make the winning of "*praise*" in that day an object for which he cultivates "fidelity" to his trust. If He says, "Well done, good and faithful," he surely does not intend, or expect, that we should be faithful for bare fidelity's sake. His "Well done" is in itself an object to be worked for. Finally, if praise is not for ability only, or chiefly, or for success, but for faithfulness, all may win that! [The Pounds, Luke xix., exhibits *graduated reward* according to *graduated results* from equal ability and endowment. The Talents, Matt. xxv., exhibits *equal praise* for

unequal ability and endowment, because of *equal fidelity*. Both are true principles of the judgment.] [Said Bishop Thirlwall, writing to a friend, "The law of God's kingdom is 'He that is *faithful in a few things* shall be made *ruler* over many things.' But how little it matters whether there are many or few, so long as there is the faithfulness which makes the most of the few, and can do no more with the many."] [Robertson, *Expos. Lectures, in loco*, says: "Learn not to judge, for we do not know the heart's secrets. We judge men by gifts, or by a correspondence with our own peculiarities; but God judges by fidelity. Many a dull sermon is the result of humble powers, honestly cultivated, whilst many a brilliant discourse arises merely from a love of display. Many a diligent and active ministry proceeds from the love of power. Learn to be neither depressed unduly by blame, nor, on the other side, to be too much exalted by praise. Life's experience should teach us this. . . . And our own individual experience should teach us how little men know us! How often, when we have been most praised and loved, have we been conscious of another motive actuating than that which the world has given us credit for; and we have been blamed, perhaps disgraced, when if all the circumstances were known we should have been covered with honour. Therefore let us strive . . . to be tranquil; smile when men sneer; be humble when they praise, patient when they blame. Their judgment will not last; 'man's day' is only for a time, but God's is for Eternity."]

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 6—13.

*Kings; Real and False.*

I. **Where to look for the true kings.**—"How it strikes a stranger" used to be the title of a pleasant bit of thinly veiled satire on many of the commonest facts and customs of our daily life, familiarity with which has dulled in us the perception of their absurdity or their unrighteousness. Had one of the "principalities and powers" from "the heavenly places" been told off, in the days of our Epistle, to guide through the Roman world a "stranger" from some other planet, and had been asked to show his planetary charge the men of that age who were destined to stand forth in all future ages as its greatest, and to leave their work most deeply on the centuries "after Christ," he would have conducted him to no philosophers or statesmen, but to a scattered dozen or so of Galilean country-people, who were beginning to be distinguished in their own obscure circle of friends as "*the apostles*"! "Find me, let me see," says the visitant from the distant sphere, "the greatest man of the time, the man who will be seen by-and-by to count for most in the story of your race, the man whose influence and example and teaching are going to live and grow and govern your world's life after he is gone. Where is the king of the world?" Certainly not within any then recent, or any then coming years, upon the throne of the Cæsars. The Stoics said more worthily, "The wise man is king"; but could hardly just then have found our inquirer a wise man of the first rank. As the verdict of the ages has pronounced, as the eliminating process of the oblivion of history has left names emergent from the general obscurity and forgetfulness of the remote past, our visitor would have needed conducting to a humble lodging in the city of Ephesus, to see a by no means striking-looking Jew sitting at work, with roughened, dirty hands, making goat-hair tent-cloth; perhaps, as he does so, dictating a letter to a friendly amanuensis who sits beside him, taking down from his lips, in only moderately good Greek, thoughts which are often sadly broken in their grammatical expression—sentences which, what with the pauses to allow for the writing down and with the impetuousness of the thinker's heart, not seldom get very disjointed in their logical form. Or they might happen to find him on the

Jewish Sabbath, a private person in some synagogue, taking what opportunity he can get of discussing the story and the claims of one Jesus of Nazareth, to whom he seems greatly devoted. And he has a strangely unroyal story of persecution from his own friends and countrymen, of repeated scourgings from Roman lictor and Jewish synagogue officers, of shipwrecks and hunger and cold, and want of necessary clothing. Yet that man's name is going to stand forth as the foremost name of the age, as the most influential ruler of the thoughts and morals and activities and destinies of that and all after-ages. Our visitor might well wonder at the topsy-turveydom of the world where such things can be; where the kings are "*fools*" and "*weak*," "*despised*," "*hungry*," "*naked*," "*buffeted*," the "*refuse*" of the world, and where the "*puffed-up*" Corinthians, "*full*" of nothing but self-esteem, are kings and "*judges*," forsooth, of apostles; where "the world knows nothing of its greatest man." [1. A commonplace of the cynical moralist in all ages. The age is past, the men are dead, before the sorting-out process of history relegates to their real obscurity many who lived loudest to the public ear and most obtrusive to the public eye in their own generation, and leaves the really great and strong and good and helpful to stand forth, like the temples of some ancient city amidst the wreck of the common buildings or the waste from which the very traces of other slighter edifices have disappeared. 2. The men of thought are really the kings of the race. Man is, in the last analysis of things, ruled by Mind; and, still more, by Mind *plus* Character. The royalty of Mind apart from principle has indeed the golden head, but the feet are of clay, and it cannot permanently stand the shocks and tests of time. 3. Paul would have said—and it is after all *the* Truth—"Jesus Christ is King; I am only king '*in Him*.'" And if in the year 27 A.D. our visitor from some other sphere had sought for *the* Man, *the* Name, *the* Ruler of the world, he must indeed have seen a Tiberius on the Imperial throne, the absolute ruler of the lives of millions of men, a monster of cruelty and vice, surfeited to utter *nausea* with the banquet of his own vicious pleasures, but must have turned away from him to far-away Judæa, to a desolate district amongst its most rugged mountain region, to find a peasant Carpenter, alone, hungry, tempted to help Himself to miraculous bread, seeing that His Father in heaven seemed to have left Him in a wilderness to starve. And yet earlier, though Magi from the East aimed more nearly true, when they sought the King, not in Rome or Athens, but in Jerusalem, yet even they missed the mark. The King was a Babe in a manger in a village *khan* in Bethlehem. And later they would have found Him on a cross. 4. The law of disturbed, topsy-turveyed order holds good of *the* King, and of His apostles, and of His people. The "*meek* are the heirs of the earth" (Matt. v. 5). The world is "out of joint." The Problem of Evil faces us, sooner or later, in every path of thought and inquiry we pursue, no matter what direction we take. For "*God hath appointed*" (ver. 9). 5. One thing, then, and one only, is clear: that Paul, or any other servant of God, should, and can afford to, go simply, directly forward day by day, doing duty, doing right, speaking all the message of God which is given him, bearing to be called a "*fool*" and "*weak*," to be buffeted whilst he only "*entreats*," to be "*persecuted*," etc. (as vers. 10-13), and leaving all question of the effect of his life, and of the estimate man forms of him (ver. 3 above), and of the rank he will by-and-by take before God and man. It will take care of itself. God will take care of it and of him. Once Paul stood at the bar of Felix. Soon after, Felix sat trembling before the arraignment of the man of conscience (Acts xxiv. 16-25). And which to-day does all the world count the greater, nobler man? But meanwhile:]

II. **What a "royal" life!** (vers. 10-13).—1. The greatest man of the time is the "*filth*" and "offscouring" of the world! The World—and even the Church of Corinth—are holding continually their "*day*" of judgment (ver. 3). And, as

though in petty mimicry of that greater "*Day*," the sequel of whose sentence shall be that out of the kingdom of the Son of Man shall be gathered "all things that offend" (Matt. xiii. 41), they are sweeping out into the Gehenna of their condemnation and rejection Paul and his fellow-apostles. 2. Yet the kings, God's true kings, do come to their kingdom (ver. 8). Their Lord has received His throne. He was cast out and rejected as though He had been the "off-scouring" of all kings. But His vindication and glory have come. And it is the pledge and foretaste of their vindication and glory and enthronement in the day when "the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. xiii. 43). When their Lord comes in His glory, they come *into* theirs. 3. A "royal" life! Why, it is hardly the life of common, peaceable, happy citizens! Rather call it the death-in-life of gladiators or criminals. Year after year it is one battle with forces and men, wholly evil, before which it seems certain they must succumb. [Yet they conquer by dying; as did their Lord. "It is finished!" is the cry of a Conqueror. Every one "that falleth on this stone shall be broken." Let the hard-pressed, persecuted Christian be patient. The victory is with the dying ones of the amphitheatre. How often has a dying Stephen pricked deeply the conscience of a Paul! And not only are the "*angels*" looking on. The Lord Himself is amongst the deeply interested spectators.] The world's kings are in the arena, gazed at, scoffed at, buffeted, slain. But one touch transforms it all! *God* has appointed it, has thus exhibited them in the world's great amphitheatre; and as they fall one after another, by the sword, the cross, the scourge, the fire, they cry, dying, "*It is for Christ's sake!*"

III. **"We apostles, doomed to die, salute you!"** Who are these human spectators whom the Apostolic band salutes from the arena? Those who sit complacently there criticising this Paul so confidently, as good judges might appraise the points of a good gladiator or a criminal down there in the sand; setting up, playing off one against another, of the dying band exhibited there; with lofty superiority of wisdom and strength shouting at them their taunts of "Weak!" and "Fools!" Who are these who are so "*full*" of knowledge that a Paul can teach them nothing more? Such judges of an apostle that they can weigh up and measure off and ticket with the exact bulk and size and value they have determined, a Paul, or a Cephas, or an Apollos? Why, one would think that they were "*full*" and needed hardly any more of God and His bounty; or, at least, that the Judgment was indeed over, and that they had already entered into the glory and the triumph of the "Kingdom of God," in its eternal and supreme form! These sit and talk and judge like kings! Yet every rag of their royal robe of wisdom and strength and Christian standing they owe to another. What is their own? And how nearly all do they, under Christ, owe to those very men, Paul and Apollos! To whom, moreover, do they owe it that there ever came a Paul into their city to bring the "glad tidings" of the King and the Kingdom? The premier Church in European Christianity? Perhaps; but if they sit upon the spectators' benches, in quasi-royal state, whilst apostles struggle and suffer and die down below, observed of angels and scorned of men, who seated them there? Yes, one thing is their own. God who, mediately or immediately, gave them all besides, never gave them the self-conceit which puffs them up. And, little as they suspect it, their inflated notion of their ability to judge between teacher and teacher, and their overweening, swelling self-centering of thought, make them the easy, willing bondmen of any party leader who will flatter their judgment and say "Yes" to their opinions. These inflated, "windbag" "*kings*" of Corinth are really subjects after all; but they have made their own yoke, and, in the vain wisdom of their foolish heart, have chosen their party-leaders for their lords. The servant of his own vain, darkened heart (Rom. i. 21) readily becomes the "servant of man" (vii. 23). If only a

man may be honoured and flattered in the choosing of his own tyrant, he will wear any yoke. The sham king easily becomes the real slave! [Much of the revolt of unbelief against "orthodoxy" means only a change of masters. *Free*-thought is often entirely under the yoke of great names. Much in the same way as some nations have thrown off the yoke of an ancient, native dynasty of kings, only to put themselves under the yoke of a dictator or a despot, perhaps an alien. But then it is something to have chosen your own despot and your own bondage! "Heresy" originally meant only "choice"; but moral conditions and evil so constantly mingle with and colour and direct choice, that the evil connotation early attached itself to the word (beginning to appear even in Tit. iii. 10). There are *schools* of unbelief as well as of belief, where learners obediently take in the master's principles. Self-will *doubts on authority* as certainly as many Christians must needs *believe on authority*.]

[NOTE on ver. 13.—Readers of this Commentary, on both sides of the Atlantic, who are interested in the Evangelical Revival in England in the eighteenth century, may find an apposite and helpful parallel to this verse in the following words of a prominent helper of John Wesley in the early days of the movement: "There was law for us, but we could not find a magistrate who had courage or honesty enough to put it in force. [No Gallio to drive the persecutors from the judgment seat.] Men of all ranks used their power and influence to stop the blessed work of God. They spoke all manner of evil against the work and the instruments employed therein. They dispensed with two or three awakened clergymen tolerably well; these were regularly ordained, men of learning, gentlemen, and divines; but to see a ploughman or an honest mechanic stand out to preach the Gospel, it was insufferable. Hell was roused from beneath. . . . Layman and ecclesiastic joined heart and hand to suppress these pestilent fellows; not with acts of kindness, Scripture, or reason, but with invectives and lies. Dirt, rotten eggs, brickbats, stones, cudgels—these were Satan's arguments in vindication of his own cause. It was the common cry in town and country: 'Press them for soldiers, send them on board a man of war, transport them, beat them, stone them, send them to prison, or knock out their brains, and despatch them at once, for there is no law for them.'" (Christopher Hopper, *Lives of Early Methodist Preachers*, i. 191 *sq.*). The early history of the Friends in England abounds in many parallel stories of sufferings. In fact, such persecution is the opprobrium of no one Church, nor of "The Church" in any true sense. The persecutors may in name be Christians, but it is the work of the evil heart in man, in every age and Church, expressing in the like violence its hatred of good. Paul should be pictured, not as a prince-apostle, but as a working, tent-maker evangelist, and a Jew to boot; often roughly handled; and always, by the educated and high-placed of his day, when they happened to hear of such an obscure person, taken at the world's valuation of an early Methodist lay evangelist or a Quaker preacher.]

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 14—21.

*Fatherly Appeals; Fatherly Discipline.*

I. **The tender relationship.**—Paul was a gardener (iii. 9), then a "master builder" (iii. 10), then a "minister of Christ" (iv. 1), then a "steward" in God's household, the Church (iv. 1). Now he is a "father," even to such thankless sons as these Corinthians. His heart cannot keep up the satire and rebuke and self-vindication against them; to think of them, and to recall their past, even that he might rebuke, melts him down. The tears are in his voice, "*my beloved sons.*" No tie more tender—no tie so tender—as that which binds together the minister and his spiritual children. No love deeper than that of the man who

has seen in some souls the satisfaction of the sore travail of his own (Gal. iv. 19). No pain more acute than for the father to lose the love of his sons, or to see their life a flagrant contradiction to all he tried to teach and to be before them. They will not be his "*imitators.*" That minister has not yet tasted the chief joy of the ministry who cannot say to any one soul, "*In Christ Jesus have I begotten you in the Gospel.*" Is he after all nothing but their "*instructor*," their "*tutor*," their "*pedagogue*," fulfilling indeed a very useful function as he brings them to the school of some better *teacher*, and guards and shields and trains the young life committed to his care? The man who takes refuge in this, that he does not indeed "see conversions," but he "builds up the Church," certainly is not doing nothing, but is doing only that half of a minister's work which presupposes the new life to have begun. The "*instructor*" is needed, but the complete minister is the "*father*" also. And to his spiritual children that man will be like no other man. If they will hear "*admonition*" from any lips, surely it will be from his.

II. **And the father is a model for his children.**—"*Be imitators of me.*" All reproach of egotism or vanity is beside the mark, when it is remembered that the father is talking thus, in that familiar love of family life which expects to be understood as a matter of course. The father is not on his guard against being mistaken when he talks to his children. (See also, for another turn to the thought, in Critical Notes.) One of the brothers, Timothy, shall tell them again, if they have forgotten them, their spiritual father's rules for "behaviour in the House of God" (as he afterwards himself gave them to this same Timothy, 1 Tim. iii. 15); Paul's little household code for the training up of the children's life and the ordering of their activities, which he was accustomed to enjoin wherever a new family circle—call it "a Church"—sprang up. How Paul's dear children would treasure up every word which their spiritual father had left behind him! How our boys remember "what father used to say"! How the girls copy "what mother used to do"! "*Remember my ways which be in Christ;*" it is a charming ideal. He is himself a man "*in Christ.*" The formative principle, that which governs all his own life, and gives its distinctive tone to his judgments, and preferences, and dislikes, and volitions, is the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him. It is really Christ expressing and exhibiting Himself through Paul. If then he says, "Copy me, children," it is after all, "Copy Christ, children." It will be a task to distress and daunt the minister if he approach it from this side: "I must so bear myself, and so be, that my people may safely be imitators of me, even when I am least adverting to the effect of my very life upon them." But let him rather approach it from this side, "I must be in Christ," all the problem then falls into ordered simplicity of solution. All that springs out of the life "*in Christ*" may safely be followed. Be "*in Christ*," and leave the rest to take care of itself.

III. **Yet the father must needs sometimes speak sharply, and even use "the rod."**—Nothing but "*love*" and the "*spirit of meekness*" would be defective family government where the children are "*puffed up.*" Even as "*the rod*" and the rebuke alone would be imperfect family government too. The "*words*" need the "*power*" behind them; but the "*power*" should be held, if it may be, in reserve. And (as in 2 Cor. i. 18-20) if Paul seems self-assertive, it is simply that the man lives so thoroughly in his message and work, the Gospel he preaches has put its own stamp so deeply upon the man, that what is true of it is true of him; and, conversely, as is the man so are the Gospel and the kingdom he preaches. [The man preaches no "Yes" and "No" Gospel; he is no "Yes" and "No" man (2 Cor. as above). So here:] He comes on no errand of personal vindication: he comes to vindicate the "*kingdom of God*," which has been endangered and endamaged at Corinth. It is not only or chiefly that he will show himself to have both "*words*" and "*power*"; and his thunder says Jerome: "As ... te...

as I read Paul, I seem to myself to hear, not words, but thunder-claps"] to be wedded to swift-striking lightning. He comes only as the embodiment of a Gospel order of things in which indeed are words, tender or stern, as need may require, but where every word can be translated into a deed of blessing or of chastening wrath.

[IV. 1. This unconscious conformity of Paul to the Gospel he preaches is a real parallel to the, not conformity with but, identification of Christ and His Gospel. He and His religion, the Gospel of His Kingdom, are alike "the Way" (Acts ix. 2, xix. 9, 23); "the Truth" (not so precisely, but see, *e.g.*, 2 Cor. xiii. 8, 2 Thess. ii. 13, 1 Tim. iii. 15); "the Life" (Acts v. 20). 2. The same fundamental unity of character and form makes the paragraph under consideration so curiously and closely parallel to the case of God and His erring and wayward children, that, without any violence to sense or to essential Truth, it becomes **almost a parable.** Thus (1) In all His dealings with sinful men in these days of His grace, God designs their amendment. Like Paul here, He desires to touch their heart into sorrow and into a reformatory love toward Himself. Even in their waywardness He does not deny them the name "*children*" or the epithet "*beloved.*" For His Son's sake the race, even in their fall, are "*the men of His goodwill.*" If they will not be "*admonished,*" then there must come, even for these, the "*shame* and everlasting contempt" (Dan. xii. 2). (2) "*One is your Father,*" said the Great Teacher, the Eldest Son of the Family (Matt. xxiii. 9). "Your *Father*;" it is the new name for God which leaps instinctively to the lips of the pardoned and adopted sinner, when "*the Spirit of His Son*" is "*sent forth into his heart*" (Gal. iv. 6). It was unknown to the Old Testament saints [Ps. ciii. 13, lxviii. 5 are no real exceptions; Ps. lxxxix. 26 is theocratic rather than personal; Jer. iii. 4 is put into the lips of the nation, and is not personal]; no Old Testament saint got beyond "Friend," and ordinarily were only "servants," trusted and beloved and honoured indeed, but never, as does every New Testament saint, saying "*Abba, Father,*" as the customary, instinctive word of address to God. Nor does a man in the Old Testament stage of his spiritual life—for every man's spiritual history recapitulates in brief summary the history of "the dispensations"—say "*Abba.*" (3) And the "*Fatherhood*" and the "*Sonship*" depend on a new-*born* life; the children have "*been begotten again*" (1 Pet. i. 3), and this "*through the Gospel,*" the living, "*incorruptible seed*" of a new life (1 Pet. i. 23). (4) He says—as Paul, with a special reference, once says for Him (Eph. v. 1)—"*Be ye imitators of Me.*" Indeed, their new-created life is "*after God,*" the Pattern (Col. iii. 10; Eph. iv. 24). (5) And has He not sent a "*beloved Son,*" "*faithful*" (Heb. iii. 2) to His Father's commission and errand, who brings into men's remembrance God's "*ways*"? What He desires, what He is—the verbal pattern and the character-pattern to which God would have His children conform—where are they so spoken, where are they so seen, as by and in the Son who has been sent to men in their forgetful, wayward, rebellious mood of mind and heart? (6) But men are "*puffed up*" as though God were afar off, and never could or would draw nigh, to any practical purpose. The natural heart is epicurean in the God it imagines and desires. Deism, which recognised a God, and even a Creator, but relegated Him to a distant aloofness of place and heart and relation towards His world, and towards the life of the individual man, was only a quasi-philosophical expression of the thought of the natural heart everywhere. "Don't bring God too near me! Let me get into some far country away from Him!" Even believing science and history and politics do not escape the infection and tendency of the time, but are apt to minimise the supernatural. The scoffers of the last days cry, sometimes with a heart which feels a sinking misgiving underneath the loud mockery, "Where is the promise

of His coming?" (2 Pet. iii. 4). (As they said it of Paul at Corinth.) Paul himself, in veiled language, has reminded us how The Coming (the Parousia) will burst in upon a world in which lawless revolt in voice and act will have risen to its climax of daring against God and His Christ (2 Thess. ii. 8). [It is no mere accidental parallel that, only a moment or two before the Life-giver would raise from the dead the ruler's child, the neighbours and hired mourners "*laughed to scorn*" the words, "*Not dead but sleeping*" (Matt. ix. 24). Their mockery is a prelusive, anticipatory suggestion and hint of the loud, mocking naturalism of unbelief which shall be never more scornful and daring than on the very eve of the Parousia and the Resurrection.] Corinthian Church members who say, "Paul will never come here again—not he!" are but exhibiting the unbelieving habit of the natural heart in all men. [The parallel is not to be forced, but, until Paul arrive, Timothy will so be Paul's representative at Corinth that he who saw and heard Timothy would see and hear Paul (cf. then John xiv. 9).] (7) When He says, "Behold I come quickly, . . . to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. xxii. 12), it is as though we had Paul's words in our paragraph "writ large," written out on the Divine scale. In that day pre-eminently will the "*kingdom*" come "*in power*"! The Son, the "*Minister*" and Representative of God in that day of visitation, will bear the "*rod*"—of iron (Ps. ii. 9). The "*spirit of meekness*" (Matt. xi. 29), on which men have been presuming too far, will give place to the "*wrath of the Lamb*" (Rev. vi. 16). *Mutatis mutandis*, one might have said to the refractory, rebellious Church at Corinth, in regard to the Advent of Paul, "Be wise now therefore, O ye Corinthians," etc. (as Ps. ii. 10-12). Such flexibility and ready adaptability of Scripture language to such varying purpose; the fact that the same vessel of language will so readily hold such varying contents; such often minuteness of coincident particulars as between the contents—events or series of events, trivial and tremendous,—are not to be dismissed off-hand as fanciful or accidental. Is it not part of the organic interdependence and intercoherence of the One Book which has been, on the human side, the gradual, and largely unconcerted, accumulation of *books*, in process through many widely separated centuries?]

## *SEPARATE HOMILIES.*

Vers. 1, 2. *The Stewardship of the Minister.*

I. **The office.**—1. No great Fact in God's order is simple. It is only in the "elementary" stages of His work that we find what is not complex, many-sided in its aspects and relationships. The permanent, developed "ministry" of the Church was in even Apostolic times becoming a many-sided fact, needing many analogies to set it forth. Each one [as in all cases of teaching by analogy] has its strong point of teaching and applicability; often with its many weaker, where it does not bear pressing, or using at all. There it is supplemented by another, strong where it is weak, but needing in its turn the strength of the first to be its complement in exhibiting the whole round of the truth. The men are here called "ministers" (see Critical Notes); they are "Shepherds" (Eph. iv. 11, etc.) who "bear rule" (Heb. xiii. 17) with whatever of authority a Shepherd must of necessity have over the Flock. They are "Teachers" (Eph. as above, etc.). They are "Presbyters" or "Elders" (*e.g.* Acts xx. 28), and indeed, like those of Ephesus, are "Overseers" or "Bishops." They claim whatever respect and weight of influence is needful to enable them "to *watch over souls* (cf. Ezek. iii., xxxiii.) as they that must give account" (Heb. as above). This last clause completes the circle of ideas by inserting into its round the link of the thought found in the word "Stewards."

2. *Stewards, not priests.*—This name is never given to any order of men selected out of the general body of the Christian community. [Even as they are "ministers" of the Mediator, and not themselves mediators.] The priesthood of the Old Covenant order is, like every other essential, fundamental, basic idea of that order, brought forward into the new. There is a "priesthood" still. The essential lines which govern the representation of the office and function are still there, plain enough to establish the identity, the continuity. But they are modified; touched here, filled up in more detail there, emphasised in a third point; and, above all, are now found in complete exposition in the Man Christ Jesus, and only in Him. [Moses spoke of the coming Prophetic Order in Deut. xviii. 15; the prophets, every one, in anticipatory, suggestive, partial presentation embodied God's Idea, which was by-and-by to be fulfilled in the One Prophet. Of Him pre-eminently did Moses speak (Acts iii. 22, vii. 37). Similarly he might have said, "A Priest shall the Lord your God raise up," etc. Indeed, the fulfilment of such a saying would already have begun in the Priestly Order which had been established. Also remember how the Idea of Priesthood in its highest function more and more clearly stood out to men's apprehension, until the very phrase "High Priest," unknown at first, became a necessity of religious thought and expression.] The complete, two-sided significance of Mediatorship is exhibited in Him who is "the Apostle"—sent out from God to man—and the "High Priest"—going in from man to God—"of our profession" (Heb. iii. 1). And the offering of a sacrifice which made atonement for sin, the culminating point of the priest's office, to which everything else was only sequential and subsidiary, is now restricted to Him. In that sense Christianity knows only the one "priest." The "*steward*" is no "priest." The many, mortal priests, themselves sinners needing atonement, have yielded up their office and honour to the undying, holy One—The Son, "consecrated for evermore" (Heb. vi. 23-28). And if indeed anything of the *hierophantic* office of the priesthoods of the Gentiles seem to cling to the work of the man who has to deal with the "*mysteries of God,*" yet there is manifest and vital difference. The hierophant took in—into the *penetralia* of the building as well as of the doctrines—the few favoured ones, the esoteric circle, the *illuminandi*; took them in as a favour from himself, which he had the right to *withhold,* as well as to confer. The "steward" does impart "mysteries" indeed. But he has no right to withhold them; he has no right to make them the possession of a favoured few; their disclosure is his duty, he must bring them out to all. "Must bring them out" also. The figure must not be overpressed; but he is not the priest leading some into an inner darkness and secrecy; he is a steward bringing out from the store-chamber what is to be given freely to all waiting outside who need what he brings.

3. *Stewards, not proprietors.*—They have no controlling rights over the disclosure of the truth. They are only the "ministers" of Christ in the matter, passing on, giving round, to the hungry multitudes what He has blessed, and what has only been *given into* their hands that it may be *given away* widely *by* their hand. ["*So*" exactly means, "All things are yours," iii. 22; cf. 2 Cor. iv. 15.] They are not to indulge in the selfish indolence of the man who sits in his study, reading, reading, reading, thinking, learning, acquiring, but only slightly if at all attempting to enrich his people with the fruit of his growing knowledge of the "*mysteries.*" They have it, they are entrusted with it, to pass it on. The apostles, no doubt, might and did satisfy their own hunger with the marvellous bread, but the fainting five thousand had the prior claim. Etymologically "*stewardship*" is "*economy.*" But the ecclesiastical "economy" in the disclosure of truth

has travelled a long and aberrant way from the idea of "stewardship." It is one thing to see to it that the "babes" have only their "milk," whilst the men of full age are fed with their "meat" (Heb. v. 12, 13); it is another thing in fear, or with dishonest tact, to suppress or modify truth, in the presumed interests of "truth," or in the interests of a Church or an order of men, or for the security of some conciliar or personal dogma. Whatever is the truth of God should all be told to all. He can be trusted to take care that its widest disclosure works no real, no lasting mischief. Better the risk of mischief than of manipulation by not too honest stewards. The Bible Society is an organised expression of the stewardship of the mysteries entrusted to the Church of Christ in the gift of the Word of God. It is given to the Church to be given by the "stewards" with world-wide liberality of distribution. They may not even detain it in the store cupboard!

4. *Stewards, not discoverers.*—God is the Fountain of all the knowledge they impart. The Son is the Revealer of it all; He has drawn back, so far as it is drawn back at all, the veil under which lay hidden what the time has now come to disclose. [Cf. "Has brought to light Life and Immortality" (2 Tim. i. 10). They are not new things; they were facts before; they were there all along; but they were under a covering (? Isa. xxv. 7).] His stewards do but publish widely what He has been Himself taught, and is commissioned to disclose. [He may take as his own the words of Balaam, Num. xxiv. 13.] Nothing else lies within the four corners of a steward's commission; anything else is *ultra vires*. He may not devise a Gospel, he may not add to the Gospel speculations of his own, not fairly deducible, or to be proved, from the definite instructions and disclosures given to him (Gal. i. 8, 9). An "original thinker" in the ministry of the Church has properly his only "originality" in the analysis, and the fresher or clearer or more profitable presentation of the original *corpus* of "*mysteries*," and in the skill and fulness of knowledge with which he is able to bring from all quarters what may be laid under contribution for the illustration of their meaning and their message to men. He stands before his people as simply, by natural gifts, by special study, and by special training, "*an expert*" in their exposition.

["*The mysteries*" are dealt with under ii. 1, xv. 51.]

II. **The fidelity expected of the steward.**—There is (1) fidelity, with responsibility, to the Lord Himself; and (2) fidelity to the matter of the mystery and to the persons designed to be benefited by its disclosure; in these senses, partly accommodations of the idea of "fidelity," the responsibility is still, and only, to the Lord Himself. Beginning with (2). Paul has his own illustration, from the innkeeper who *adulterates* his wine (2 Cor. ii. 17). [The converse is suggested, under the connotation of another figure (1 Pet. ii. 2).] *There must be no tampering with the mysteries.* The fashion in such "wine" may change; the public palate may be perverted; it may demand the produce of another vineyard; but he at least will only supply this, of the best and purest he knows how to procure. He will spare no cost of pains and prayer to get this, that he may have it to offer. But he dares not—he desires not—to offer anything else. He may have the pain, and be put to the test of fidelity, of seeing those whom he desires to supply, leave him, to turn aside to the man who will give them a more popular vintage. But, for one thing, that old Gospel [not to press the figure too far] saved him, and still comforts and sustains him. In "faithfulness" to the mystery whose revelation has blessed him, and many ten thousands more, he will still dispense that. It is his presumed function and office to preach and present the "mysteries of God" in their Divine, unmingled simplicity. He is a living falsehood if, whilst he is presumed to

do that, and whilst the people expect that of him, he offers something of merely human devising or imagining; or the "mystery," indeed, but so overlaid with rhetoric, or the speculative supplements of undisciplined or uncurbed reasoning, that it is hidden and neutralised, put in such a form as never fed or saved anybody. He owes some "*fidelity*" to this very message, to the matter which has been disclosed by God, and of which he is a steward. Also, *he must be faithful to his people.* Indeed, if they are wise, they will wish him, and help him, to be faithful. If fidelity in a steward be needful anywhere, it is in dealing with Divine truth. "By these" mysteries "men live" (Isa. xxxviii. 16). These are not merely gains to knowledge, however accurate, enlarging, ennobling. They are men's life. It is of urgent necessity to them to possess in its unadulterated purity and in unstinted quantity the truth in the mysteries. It is Bread of Life for dying souls. They are a foolish people who will only ask for, and will only tolerate, what truth is pleasant or conventionally correct; *for their own* sakes they will covet, and will honour, and will thank and love the man who will only deal honestly with them as a faithful steward, who will give them the whole message of God, and will not in fear or in wicked complaisance spare themselves. He is not accountable to them (ver. 3) indeed; yet his relation to them is one which demands of him fidelity as the truest kindness. [Such "kindness" to them as that of the Dishonest Steward (Luke xvi. 1-8) may serve his dishonest turn for a moment, but will not carry him or them very far!] But, above all, (1) *he will be faithful* as a matter of responsibility *to his Master, and to God* whose mysteries he holds in trust for distribution "as every man has need." [The following verses, separately dealt with, give the noble portrait of a "*steward*" who is sustained under misconception, misrepresentation, detraction, malicious depreciation; or in the face of angry people, offended at the whole truth; by a sense of the approval of Christ, vouchsafed to him by One who knows how pure and direct his aim has been, how reverent and careful his handling of the disclosure of "*the mysteries.*"] "The Master praises; what are men?" But does the Master praise? That is ever his main question. His every day's duty will be planned under his Great Taskmaster's eye, and will be discharged with constant reference to His judgment. Motives are so intermingled in our life, the tangle so often passes all our own power of unravelling, that he will not spend overmuch time upon self-analysis. His mingled aims—right after all in their main drift and object—will be simply laid before his Master *en bloc*, for His analysis and judgment and smile of reward. If He is satisfied, the rest matter little!

III. **The people's estimate of the office and of the minister.**—Two dangers threaten: an undue exaltation, or an under-valuing of the office; or, in another alternative, a party worship of the man, as at Corinth, or a superstitious estimate of the office. 1. The under-valuing of the office is a very real danger. The "minister" must not be simply the chief, and perhaps the only paid, officer of an organisation called "a Church," which "keeps a minister," as some in the congregation keep a clerk or a manager in their business. He must not simply be the chairman of their meetings; or the president of their social gatherings; or the intellectual leader of their speculations, or of the literary or artistic activity of the young life of the Church; or their deputy on whom they devolve all the initiative of religious and philanthropic agencies which the public expect from them. He may, happily and usefully, be all these. But these are the secondary things of his office. His first and essential duty—the "Hamlet-part" in the play, without which all is miserably incomplete—is to be a steward, blessedly made familiar with the mysteries of God, by close inter-

course with God, their Giver, and coming forth from the holy intercourse to dispense them with a wisdom of adaptation to the needs of his people which is itself not a small gift and honour from God. If he only bring to his people—if his people only expect from him—spoken "leading articles" on topics of the week or of the time, perfect in literary finish; if they are satisfied with brief theses on half-secular themes, full of satirical, or sympathetic, or poetic power; if they are content with brief, admirable, but "natural," ethical prelections which do not lift up duty into any organic connection with religion, its motives, its power, its sanctions; if he never bring to their ears, and to their hunger, any of the revealed secrets of the heart and will of God,—he is not "fulfilling his ministry," nor discharging his "stewardship." If they have no hunger of heart, and do not definitely desire *to be fed*; and even resent the earnestness of the man who would gladly be to them a steward of God's mysteries, bringing them forth for the supply of their heart and conscience; they misunderstand and under-value the office. Desire him to be, pray for him that he may be, by sympathy with his aims and by grateful recognition of his work, help him to be, a steward and a faithful one! *Not less* than a steward! 2. On the other hand, *not more* than a steward. Do not think of him, do not accept of him, as a priest or an exclusive mediator with God. If he boast never so loudly of ordination by any special order of ministers, and claim to be of any special order himself; if he will thrust himself between God and the soul, as in any sense a necessary and indispensable intermediary; if he will claim over the judgment and conscience an authority which of old belonged to a prophet, and now belongs only to Christ, as represented by His Spirit, in the administration of redemption; if he will claim, in any sense, to offer a sacrifice which stands in any recessary relation to the forgiveness of sins or the maintenance of the spiritual life; if he claim priesthood in any sense which belongs exclusively to Christ, or in any sense which does not belong equally to every member of the "holy priesthood" (1 Pet. ii. 5),—then to acquiesce in such pretensions is to over-exalt the man and his office. Allow no priesthood; hear of nothing, think of nothing, but of "Ministry" and "Stewardship." Pray for him, listen to him, use him, as a steward, not less nor more. And if a man, credentialled no matter by whom, assume to be the way to God, say to him: "Thou art in the way! Stand out of my way! Christ is my Way. Let me come direct through Him to God." "*Let a man so account of us.*" A true "minister" asks no more.

Ver. 2. *Faithful Stewardship.*

I. If in the ordinary transactions of time it is imperative that those who are concerned in the management of temporal concerns should be faithful, **how much more, in matters which relate to the soul and eternity,** is it imperative that the stewards of God's mysteries should be faithful! The consequences of infidelity or dishonesty in the charge of the affairs of this life may be disastrous; but who can measure the ruin which follows when there is a want of fidelity in dealing with the things of the next life? In such case the ruin is irretrievable, the loss of the soul will stand no comparison with even the gain of the world.

II. Easy to perceive **the fidelity required of the minister** of Christ. 1. *Personal fidelity.* If a man has not experienced for himself the grace of God in convincing, converting, and sanctifying his own heart, how can he tell others of the change which is implied in all these workings of the Spirit? 2. *Consistency of life and conversation.* Even supposing that the doctrine preached is in accordance with God's Word, an inconsistent life will wither the power of the message and

frustrate the ends of its delivery. Not only this; but 3. There must be fidelity in *the declaration of the whole revealed truth* of inspiration. It is not allowed to the ambassador to deliver only a part of his message; he must proclaim the whole revealed counsel of God. He is to preach the truth in all its integrity, keeping back nothing which is plainly revealed; but as a wise householder he must bring forth things new and old, in order that he may be faithful to Him who hath called him and invested him with such lofty responsibilities. ["It is written." "It is written *again*."]

III. There are **lessons which all professing Christians may derive.**—1. "Of all our earthly possessions *we are stewards, not proprietors.* There is in the ordinary arrangements of Divine providence a vast employment of second causes, and many of the things we acquire appear to come in the course of our own efforts and as the effect of our own industry or skill; hence arises the idea of ownership, and forgetfulness that all things come of God, and that we have not a fraction to which we can lay claim as an independent possession, which we have a right to employ without reference to Him who gave it. But in truth all the secondary means . . . are gifts from God, and derive their efficacy from His imparted power or beneficence. So that, in the most literal sense, all things come of Him, *e.g.*, gifts of intellect which qualify for conspicuous usefulness to others, gifts of wealth or power for influencing largely our fellow-creatures. The point to be remembered is that all these bestowments are *entrusted* to the keeping of those who possess them to be employed by them as *stewards in trust* . . . for God's service. Have you, then, consecrated large possessions and the gain of them to the Lord, and your substance to the Lord of the whole earth? Is the talent which belongs to authority over others employed for God, for upholding God's honour, for promoting the temporal and spiritual well-being of all within the range of your influence?"

2. *Our fidelity must originate in personal piety.*—"(1) The root of Scriptural obedience consists in a right apprehension of the relationship in which we stand to God. We are His creatures, every faculty we possess is His gift, and we are bound to consecrate all we have and are to His glory. (2) More than this, God has yet a stronger claim. If we constantly remembered the wonderful love of God in the gift of His Son, we should never lose sight of the obligations under which we lie, to consecrate our souls and bodies to His service, to act as stewards who are bound to be faithful in His sight. (3) And what a motive for fidelity is supplied when we call to mind the shortness of our allotted period of service, and the near approach of the time when Christ will reappear to reckon with all His professing servants. Stewardship always implies a time of reckoning. It may be near or distant, but then there will be no escape or evasion. With what joy will Christ's true and faithful servants hear the welcome, 'Ye have been faithful over a few things,' etc. How terrible, then, the condition of those who, though they were stewards, have not been found faithful; the measure of their privileges will be the measure of their fearful condemnation. (4) Let us then bear in mind the lesson which this day's Epistle [Third Sunday in Advent] delivers for our direction. Knowing beforehand the strictness of the account which we must each one render, let us aim at dependence upon Divine grace to overcome every temptation, to conquer every difficulty, which opposes our progress in sanctification, and so to abound unto every good work that in the end we may attain to the recompense and the reward which in the last day awaits every one who shall be found to have been faithful to the stewardship confided to his keeping."—*Abridged from Bishop Bickersteth,* "*Clerical World,*" i. 172.

Ver. 7. *Human Differences; their Origin and Design.*

I. Some modern scientific thought is tending to an over-emphatic assertion of the principle of Paul's appeal. According to it, there is nothing—not even conscience—which is not simply the special and most recent result in the individual of processes, or of a conflict of processes, and, so to speak, of interests, acting and interacting and reacting through long ages and issuing in man. Thinking, willing, desiring, even the moral judgments—all are the necessary and quasi-mechanical outcome of the unbrokenly continuous past of man's natural antecedents. Nothing is his own; he has so utterly "*received*" everything he has and is, that nothing is ever really begun *de novo* in his life; nothing is ever in any real sense originated within the man himself; there is no true independence, nor creative power in the will, no freedom. The natural heart over-does its protest, and in the opposite direction would tend to claim everything, except of course the obviously derived physical part of manhood and some features and degrees of capacity and inclination which are part of the original draught of that "character" in which plainly the individual has no choice. Man feels that he is not the *mere* creature of, at any rate, his present-day and personal environment. He is made by circumstances, but he is the master of circumstances; indeed, he is often first, and intentionally, the maker of the circumstances and conditions which then make him. He will not believe that it is only an illusion when he seems to find an independent power of origination and creation in his will. The man made by "self-help" is apt indeed to be so much his ideal; any help from the outside, and above all from God, is so apt to be, to all intents and purposes, out of his calculations and thanks; that he is his own maker, his own god. The little street Arab, in the mission school belonging to a London chapel, whose minister gave me the fact, refused point-blank to say, "Give us this day our daily bread." "I shan't ask nobody; I can get my own bread" (H. J. F., from W. J. H.). He is typical of the natural heart. The Corinthian heart is "*rich*," is "*full*," and "*reigns*" royally, not only without Paul, but without God. It is the danger of wealth; of high intellectual endowment, conscious of its own nobility of powers and exulting in every conquest of a new field; of all strong character, which cannot help but know its own force, finding its judgment sound, its business instincts sure and correct, other men's will obedient and plastic before its volitions. "Our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?" (Ps. xii. 4) is no abnormal or isolated independence. It is the very antithesis of "the little child," in his readiness to believe and to do what he is told, and in his simple and natural and acknowledged dependence upon "father" for all he has and wants. But because it is so hard for the man—the manlier the harder—to "show himself the man amongst men" (1 Kings ii. 2) and to be notwithstanding only "a little child before God," it is therefore reputed "easier" for women and children to be religious than for men to be. Man's nobility, his Godlikeness, is his snare. He tends to deny any higher, any God, but himself. Paul appeals to such: "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" etc.

II. 1. **Natural character and constitution.** — "From my parents?" Yes. "From my physical tempering together and make?" Yes. But all these only spell: "G–O–D." To a Christian man of science what is or may be proved of (popularly so-called) Evolution is only so much more ascertained detail about the method of God in creation, the processes and instrumentalities He has employed. We are continually putting more and more numerous links into the chain of physical antecedents and consequents which links the will of God to the finished product; we find links almost

innumerable where our fathers neither knew nor suspected any. But to the Christian thinker the chain still begins at God, and God is still as really *in* every link as when they were fewer. Our fathers believed God in immediate and direct contact with the created thing. If we are to be compelled to interpose a complex physical process between the Creator and, *e.g.*, the finished individual man, yet He will be as really the Creator as ever. [The little child says, "God made me." The parent, or the physician, or the modern physiologist, armed with all microscopic and other implements of the minutest observation and research, if he be a Christian, still says as simply as the little child, "God made me"; although, where the ignorance of the child or the uninstructed adult knows and dreams of nothing, he has watched a curious and highly complex physical process. To reconcile all that may emerge as proved fact in the evolutionary sketch of the history of creation, with a belief in a personal Creator, is only the "God made me" example on a larger scale.] "Tell me what your natural constitution is, what your inherited mental characteristics are. Tell me how the most recent scientific men settle questions of heredity and the like. I say God made you all that, and just that and no other sort of man. They are only ascertaining and exhibiting better than could ever be done before *how* He made you. You have nothing but what He put into you: your capacities and faculties are His gifts." "But I have worked hard for my bit of money; I was up whilst other lazy people were lying in bed; I kept my eyes open, whilst other men were dreaming and let the chances slip, or never saw chances which I seized." And so on. "True; and much of it—all the patient industry, the ungrudging labour, the diligent cultivation of natural powers, the honest thrift that watched every penny—all these and more are credit to the successful man. But remember that the original force of sense and business sagacity, the robust physical basis which made all this successful activity possible, where so many others were handicapped by sickness or other physical disability, are in the last analysis of all thought, **God**. He gave these as your capital, and in a score of ways He might have spoiled your returns from it, if He had pleased." "*Thou receivedst.*"

2. *The original surroundings and home.*—No man chooses his own parents or birthplace, important factors as these are in all his after-career. "*Chance!*" is meaningless; it is no account of the matter at all; it is only a way of avoiding giving an account of it. It is only the baffled mind making its escape from the problem, covering its retreat—cuttle-fish fashion—with a dense wordy cloud. The sovereignty of God in election had in it this much of truth, evident in both Scripture and experience, that a thousand circumstances and conditions of life, all of which had some connection with, and influence upon, a man's final salvation, nearly or more remotely, were beyond his control, and from the first were settled, quite outside his own choice. Whether he should see the light in a heathen or in a Christian land, for example, is in vitally close connection with the question of a man's ultimate salvation, and, meanwhile, with his degree of moral responsibility, his standing and career and the influence of his life; this and numberless other elements in the case are ordered by rules which lie quite out of our sight, and are ordered by God. "Election" doctrine did not take sufficient account of a grace which held every man accountable for only the light and advantages he actually enjoyed, and which, on the other hand, made it possible for a man to be saved in any circumstances and with even a very limited measure of light. But, plainly, these things men "*received.*" Men should be thankful for, not vulgarly or proudly boastful of, the social

advantages of birth and station. These are no mean elements, when consecrated, in conspicuous success for God. The "gentleman" *born*, or the man of *inherited* wealth, is so much the more debtor to God to use these for the glory of Him who gave them, apart from all choice or merit in their possessor.

3. *All "natural" goodness is grace, the gift of God.*—All points of "natural" beauty of character—unselfishness, generosity, truthfulness; and, much more, all early tenderness of conscience, all early disposition towards good and towards God; such early "goodness" as makes some say, "They were naturally religious from their childhood,"—all are of God. The "natural" is all grace; the preliminary gift of the Holy Spirit. "*Man received it.*" [The old theologians who drew stern pictures of human nature in its "*total depravity*" and its utter ruin and its entireness of evil, were dealing rather with a necessary conception of clear theological thought than with actual human nature. It was needful to state, as precisely and exactly as Scripture language, interpreted and verified by observation and experience—these being in their turn lighted up and explained by Scripture statements—would make it possible and would require, what human nature would have been, and would be again, without the grace of God. And no man, who knows his own heart, can doubt that, if that grace were wholly withdrawn, and himself were simply left to temptation, there is no depth to which *he* might not sink, no length to which *he* might not depart from God. But the old sketch of human nature wanted its hard, true outlines softening, and the whole picture transfusing, with the glow and life and tenderness of the grace of God shown in Christ to every man. *Mere* human nature, wholly evil, unrelieved by grace, has never been anything but a theological conception. In *fact*, there is good in every man; very much, and very early, good in very many. "But '*thou hast received*' it. It is not thyself, but God, not nature, but grace, even before any conversion, or the desire to be converted. '*Why dost thou glory?*' etc."

4. Never will right hearts fells this more deeply and wholly true than when they stand, "*saved*," in heaven's eternal security. All their crowns of holiness, happiness, earthly sainthood, heavenly service, all will be cast before Him who gave them all. There at last "*No flesh will glory in His presence!*"

Ver. 20. *Word and Power.*

I. **True of Christianity in contrast with other ethical systems.**—As to their excellence "*in word*" they many of them deserve high praise. The religion of Jesus Christ gains nothing by an advocacy which does not do justice to the elements of truth in other religions—particularly moral truth. [As, for instance, the strong filial piety of Chinese life. Yet justice should be done to Christianity. Exaggerated praise is sometimes given to non-Christian systems. *E.g.* Confucius several times gave the rule, "What ye would not that men should do to you, do ye not do to them." There is a surface similarity in this to the "golden rule" of Christ. But no such similarity (nor any ground in history) as to warrant the supposition that Christianity has incorporated an article of Chinese morality. As a matter of historical and chronological possibility or probability, it would have been more reasonable to assert that it should have "incorporated" the equivalent saying of Shammai: "What is unpleasing to thee do not to thy neighbour." These two sayings may show the high-water mark of natural altruism; yet, as is easily seen, and often pointed out, these are negative; they restrain the hand from evil-doing; Christ's saying, "Do unto others," etc., sets the hand to busy, active benevolence and well-doing.] Hardly any considerable system of morals, ancient or modern, but enunciates some noble sentiments and precepts; the "Light that lighteth every

man coming into the world" (John i. 9) has not left Himself without a witness in heathen minds and hearts in any country or age. Yet two facts are acknowledged by general consent. First that there was never any general agreement as to a moral standard or code of rules for conduct; and next, that, however admirable and noble the "*word*" of moral teaching might be, the systems never gave, or taught, the *power* to carry out the teaching and fulfil the code. All fail there. They have offered a marvellously complete analysis of human nature, but they are altogether wanting in motive power, and in practice the machinery of such morality was found to stand still. "*Words*," plenty of them, and beautiful and noble; but *no* "*power*." The result of man's unaided moral experiment, as tried in its most highly developed form,—that of classical antiquity,—and with the greatest advantages, with philosophers for teachers whose names stand highest, beyond all comparison or competition, is exactly gathered up in Ovid's well-known confession: "I see and approve the Better; I follow the Worse." And this because power to follow the Better with any steady and persistent steps was not forthcoming. [Not only was the standard varying and uncertain, from teacher to teacher, no finality being attained, progress in ethical inquiry being "progress on a treadmill"; but no adequate motives were supplied for obedience to any one truth taught, no sanctions for the laws laid down; it was open to the individual to deny the cogency of any political or personal prudential "reasons," and the authority of even the power and loftier dictates of his own nature, when it was at its best. Cicero long ago mockingly pointed out how seldom their moralisings produced much effect upon the lives of the very teachers themselves (*Tusc. Quæst.*, 2). And, above all, nobody himself knew, or could teach others, how to fulfil his own ideals.] "Now as a matter of fact, Christianity has introduced into humanity a moral power, unknown apart from the presence of Christian faith and knowledge. This power has proved itself adequate to the vanquishing of the natural enmity of the heart to self-control and self-denial. The Christian religion has found and revealed a way of rendering virtue—which is admittedly admirable and desirable—actually attainable; has made the path of obedience progressively congenial, attractive, and delightful. There is a general agreement that this is the distinguishing characteristic of Christianity. First, in point of time, comes the provision for pardon; but first in point of real importance comes the provision of a *spiritual* power, which secures the love and practice of holiness." [Professor J. Radford Thomson, whose words may stand for many more. But the fact is undisputed.]

II. **True of Christianity as compared with Judaism.**—This had a code, higher and most perfect in its comprehensive and adequate range of directions. And, further, it rooted its most thoroughly symmetrical and perfect code in the personal relation to God: "I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have," etc. [A sceptical lawyer began to read the Bible in order from the beginning, and "pulled up" at last at the Decalogue, with the pregnant exclamation, "Where did Moses get that law?"] Further, and more remarkably still, it stated the true secret of all law-keeping, in its most condensed form: "*Love* the Lord thy God; *love* thy neighbour as thyself." [Though note how little prominent is this latter (Lev. xix. 18), a mere sentence among a series, until, so to speak, disinterred by Christ, and exhibited in all its significance as one of the two cardinal enactments of the whole Law.] Yet, though it was a Divine directory of life, it was annulled "for the *weakness* and unprofitableness thereof" (Heb. vii. 18). The Law "*could not make*" the comers to its sacrifices and other ordinances "*perfect*" (Heb. x. 1). God

erected this fingerpost of duty; the highway of righteous life was in no sort of doubt. But the Law was only a fingerpost; it showed the way, but gave no help to walk in it. It condemned trespass swiftly and sternly, but it gave no direct aid to obedience. "*By the Law was the*" clearer and clearer "*knowledge of sin*" (Rom. iii. 20). But in the Law itself was nothing more. [Under the Old Testament order there was no doubt not only knowledge, but obedience, and obedience which meant victory over opposing evil within and around the man. Yet this was not in the Law, but was an anticipation and foretaste of the grace of the Gospel.] Jewish seekers after a life of moral perfectness found all the inner moral division and weakness which the heathen felt and mourned over; they understood it better than the best of heathen moralists could. But all their struggle ended in the moral breakdown and confessed failure of Rom. vii. 12-24. The Law said, "Do and live," "Do or die"; but of itself it could not show how to "Do." It was *in word only*, not "*in power.*"

III. **The kingdom of God has, and brings, power.**—In its clearer revelation as to Rewards and Punishments in the future life it has supplied sanctions such as even Judaism could not furnish. In its Central Person, Jesus Christ, it has supplied a perfect Pattern, a living Summary of all perfect human nobility and righteousness of life and character. In its love to that Personal Saviour it has supplied a perfect, a self-acting motive to obedience; a motive which, as matter of fact, has produced results which no other power could effect, and has done this in some drawn from the lowest types and grades of human life. [That love for Christ, moreover, supplies the most perfect legislation for the individual, prompting a very *instinct for law* where there is no express command.] Yet even in the most perfect Example it is only in a figurative sense that there is "power" to secure obedience and to elevate and purify; the real power is in the man himself, in his own will. Even a motive is not power. Love for Christ is a "power" only in the same quasi-poetic sense as Example is. The real spiritual dynamic that enables the will, and brings men at last to the secret of "*power*," is in the working of the Holy Ghost upon, with, in the will of man. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" makes a man "free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. viii. 2). *All this is experience* in the man who has "entered into the kingdom of God" (Matt. xviii. 3); or as, with a significant reversal of the polarity of the thought, it is sometimes put, who has "received the kingdom," and let it enter into him (Mark x. 15). The philosophers do but analyse more clearly and fully and cast into accurate and orderly language what all human hearts more vaguely think and feel on moral questions. No representative question is ever raised by them and discussed which earnest men somewhere have not at some time less definitely recognised and dealt with. [The problems and solutions of Job, *e.g.*, or of Ecclesiastes are not so definitely those of any special age or country or philosophy, as to yield any basis for locating date or authorship. They are the questions and answers of serious men everywhere, always.] Every man's spiritual life, as he is led up to and into the "Kingdom of God," recapitulates the moral history of the race. He has his patriarchal age and his Mosaic dispensation, before he comes into the Christian era of his life and experience. [Hence such passages and descriptions as in Gal. iv. 3-7 are true, as between Judaism and Christianity and men living on the border-time of both, and as between the days during which the individual is being led "*unto Christ*" and those during which he lives "*in Christ.*" In Paul and many of his Christian contemporaries the dispensational contrast and the personal were coincident. They lived,

historically as well as experimentally, through the transition from the one age to the other.] The Law showed the way; the Gospel accompanies and directs and upholds the traveller. Conscience is light, not force; knowledge, not help or power. The bitterest of the bitter cup of true repentance is the experience, "When I would do good, evil is present with me"—present, and so much master that, "The evil that I would not, that do I." "Our moral nature is disordered, and one of the chief evidences of the disorder is the conflict between duty and inclination. Conscience and the will are not at one. We may form beautiful ideals, but we cannot realise them. Desires which are known to be mean and poor often prevail in us against the voice of conscience and even the protests of reason. And often the state of things is worse than that of a conflict in which the bad *usually* gets the better of the good. In many the result is a state of helpless captivity. In these cases lusts of the body rise to sovereign power and crush down in ignominious bondage every good and wholesome desire. Men and women are degraded far below the level of brutes. In the grip of imperious lusts they are powerless, struggle as they may. When the outward evil is not so great, the triumph of evil is not so conspicuous; but that evil reigns is often lamentably apparent, even to the persons themselves. Often their lives are governed by a selfishness that, regardless of others, seeks to secure everything for themselves. [Culture, with its tendency to fastidiousness of liking and judgment, is often exceedingly selfish. Of itself it certainly has no redemption from self in it.] The will of God, which they know to be the true sovereign authority of the world, is little regarded except in so far as the ordinary usages of society may happen to agree with it. These lives do not conform to any noble standard. And even at their very best there is such a discord between what they are inclined to do and what they ought to do, that their highest achievements in duty are but the result of a hard struggle, not the free, spontaneous movements of souls delighting in the ways of truth and righteousness." (Dr. W. G. Blaikie.)

IV. **But the Gospel scheme provides "power."**—It has been a power working with the preacher of the kingdom of heaven. With what sledge-hammer force does the Gospel *word*, when full of the *power* of the Holy Ghost, break open the door of the most utterly evil heart, and find admittance for conviction and for Christ! How this *power* has again and again borne down before it, and swept away in its victorious rush, all the barriers of social pride, of personal reserve or timidity, bringing to open concern the most unlikely hearts! The man also who receives into himself the Spirit of God as a Spirit testifying to his adoption into the family of God (Rom viii. 15-17) finds he has received the "Spirit of *power*" as well as "of love and a sound mind" (2 Tim. i. 7). As a matter of mental and moral scientific analysis, no question is more perplexing, or seems more nearly insoluble, than that of the enabling effect of the Spirit of God upon the human will. But the simplest child of God finds that the same Spirit whose inwelling brings him peace and joy and hope brings power also. Old habits seem like Samson's bonds of new rope when touched with His fire. The old struggle with the heart and its inclinations still may many times be a severe one; but it ends, not as in Rom. vii., in defeat, but in victory. Evil may be "present," but it *rules* no longer. The "new creature" is but "new" with the strength of the child, but that strength may be increased until the walk is with the firm and victorious tread of the man in Christ. Self-control, though in no strength of Self, is enjoyed and exhibited; patience and forgiveness of injuries—an impossible task to the natural heart—become possibilities and facts. Every mission-field, every Christian congregation, has

its "modern miracles," its moral miracles: degraded ones lifted out of the slough of gross or cruel sin; the utter, hard, proud, cold worldling-life melted away, and giving place to humility, unselfishness, tenderness, sympathy, self-sacrificing benevolence, and so on. Facts prove Paul's words true. And only the Gospel of the kingdom of God has ever thus solved the moral problems which were the despair of the noblest ancient philosophers and ethics. The privilege of the regenerate life, moreover, should not be taken to stop short of this possession of *moral power*. The Gospel gives the moral leverage and the fulcrum—both—with which the world may be lifted. And this is no mere Christian boasting, but an assertion whose truth is verified in the whole history of the modern world. The representative world was sick at heart and corrupt, hastening to political and social ruin and disintegration, when Christianity came and put a new force into man and society. The world took a new start, and began a new life, at the era of the advent of the "kingdom of God." And if it has seemed to fail in persons or in societies since, it is when it has degenerated into a thing of "*words*" only, in creeds and pulpits and life; and, indeed, has reverted to the ethics of cultured heathen naturalism in its doctrine of human nature; still bearing the Christian name, wearing the Christian mask, but heathen—natural—at heart, and in all essential principles and motives, and in the force which is appealed to for recovering man from degradation and moral failure and ruin.

## CHAPTER V.

### *CRITICAL NOTES.*

#### The Case of Shameful Sin.

(Also in 2 Cor. ii. 5-11, vii. 8-12.)

Ver. 1. **Commonly.**—"*Actually*" (R.V.; widely accepted). **Among you.**—Join with "*there is*," not with "*reported*." News not only brought by Chloe's people (i. 11); more widely spread, reaching Paul from other quarters also. "Such cases not unknown in Roman society, but regarded with horror. Cic., *Pro Cluentio*, 5, 6, 'O mulieris scelus incredibile, et præter hanc unam in vita omni *inauditum*'" (Stanley and Farrar, aptly). This agrees with the true reading; "*named*" *omitted*. **Father's wife.**—A living, injured husband (2 Cor. vii. 12); probably (*not certainly*) the father. **Hath.**—Euphemistic for actual, married possession.

Ver. 2.—Prefer affirmative to interrogative form (Ellicott, with Auth., R.V., against many moderns). **Puffed up.**—Not about this, but as in iv. 6. *Q.d.* "Even this has not pricked the bladder of your inflation, of which I have been speaking to you! Spite of the occurrence of this in your midst, ye are still," etc. Observe spiritual and intellectual pretensions of highest order, not accompanied by any sufficient, even elementary, moral sensibility! (See Appended Note, from Farrar.) Observe "*Did . . . had done.*"

Ver. 3. **Absent.**—At Ephesus. **Present in spirit.**—*Not* the Holy Spirit. *Evans* puts very strong meaning into phrase: "It appears from this and from other texts that Paul's own spirit, illumined . . . and vivified by the Divine, must have been endowed on certain occasions with a more than ordinary insight into the state of a Church at a distance." He lays (too much?) stress on Col. ii. 5. "We may infer, then, that St. Paul could on occasions exercise this spiritual gift of supernatural immediate intuition even as our Lord on earth in His own greater measure did when He saw Nathanael, etc. (John i. 51). Elisha: 'Went not my heart with thee?' If Elisha, why not St. Paul?" **Judged.**—Word in itself neutral = "have given my decision." Sentence held—as if unwilling to let fall—till ver. 5.

Ver. 4.—See Homiletic Analysis.

Ver. 5.—1. A physical penalty (viz. sickness supernaturally, directly, inflicted by Paul; which might have been fatal, but as directly, supernaturally, was remitted on the repentance of the offender). So Ananias and Sapphira. Bar-Jesus (Acts xii.). Such visitation Simon at Samaria feared (Acts viii. 24). Paul exercised the power much later on (1 Tim. i. 20) on Hymenæus and Alexander. 2. Consequences more than mere exclusion from Eucharist or the Church. 3. "*Many sickly*" at Corinth, "*many sleep*" (xi. 30); *i.e.* other cases of this form of physical, Divine, chastisement, even of death. 4. See homiletic treatment, further. N.B. "*spirit*," not "*soul*."

Ver. 6.—Evans: "Is this a time to parade your lofty privileges of saintly kingship, or to flaunt and flourish your Christian wisdom embroidered with worldly philosophy, when this scandal of the Church stares you in the face? Theological pomp . . . a moral plague begun." **Leaven.**—Proverbial, as in Gal. v. 9. Leaven (except in Matt. xiii. 33), an illustration of the *pervasive* working of *evil*. The man, and the principle of his action, both included in the "leaven."

Ver. 7.—In Exod. xii. 15 *sqq.* are found two ideas: "*No leaven*," "*cut off*" an offender. *Hence the connection of thought. Perhaps* emphasised by an actual or recent Passover celebration (letter written soon before Pentecost, xvi. 8); but too precarious to make these allusions give a very definite date. "*Ye* **are** *unleavened*" does not *necessarily* mean more than, "Ideally ye are, as being a Christian Church at all." **Purge out.**—"On the evening [of the 13th] commenced the 14th of Nisan, when a solemn search was made with lighted candle through each house for any leaven that might be hidden or have fallen aside by accident. Such was put by in a safe place, and afterwards destroyed with the rest" (Edersheim, *Life of Jesus*, ii. 480; and he adds in a note:) "The Jerusalem Talmud gives the most minute details of the places in which search is to be made. One Rabbi proposed that the search should be repeated at three different times!" **Our passover.**—"*Our*"; cf. "We (also) have an altar" (Heb. xiii. 10). Omit "*for us.*" **Sacrificed.**—True idea; word, however, does not necessarily mean more than "*slain.*" "Vers. 6-8 suggest the practical use and probable design of the Mosaic ritual" (Beet).

Ver. 8. **Malice.**—Not in modern, narrow, sense of mischievous, personal animosity. Broader; "*vitiositas*," evil-heartedness; opposed to "sincerity," the transparent-heartedness in which is "no darkness at all." **Truth.**—A word (opposed to *wickedness*) of the *Johannean* dialect; but Paul and John "agree in one."

Ver. 9. **In a [lost] epistle.**—[No theological difficulty here. A vast amount of literary material (*e.g.* Chronicles of Kings of Judah and Israel; or the incompletely compiled material for Gospels of which Luke speaks—not necessarily *unreliable* accounts) connected with the facts of Revelation has perished. All has been preserved which was needful to serve, or perhaps could serve, the purpose of the Spirit of God in conveying an "official," Divine, account of the history and meaning and future of God's Redemption-scheme. These two letters to Corinth, *under Him, written for preservation.* Any other, having answered its temporary purpose, could be left to the fate of ordinary private letters. All of any permanent value in the lost material is in these preserved.] *For* a lost epistle, (1) vers. 2, 6 are not specific enough to be the injunction referred to; (2) same words in 2 Cor. vii. 8 refer to a *previous* (this first) letter; (3) "*now*" contrasts with something written before (but query this?). *Against*, (1) no trace of it, unless here; (2) "I *wrote*," explained as epistolary aorist; (3) doctrinal presumption against the loss of anything from an inspired pen. (More fully discussed in the Introduction.)

Ver. 10. **Covetous.**—Paul's severe estimate of this sin. In Rom. vii. regarded as in some sort the typical sin. "The accursed desire of *having*." A craving for *more*, particularly that "more" which is possession of others. (Yet not necessarily this. Cf. Luke xii. 15, which shows that covetousness may as well be displayed in the spirit in which a man seeks, and holds, *his own*.) A cuttle-fish sin with many tentacles; in the case at Corinth reaching out for, not money, but another man's wife. **Idolater.**—Earliest-known use of the Greek word here employed.

Ver. 11. **Brother.**—In the technical sense, meaning "a Christian." Presumably, therefore, such a man's "*idolatry*" only extended to joining in the heathen public banquets. Cf. "covetousness which is idolatry" (Col. iii. 5). **To eat.**—Not merely at the Lord's Supper, but in any voluntary intercourse in private life.

Ver. 12. **Judging.**—In the sense of exercising a right to pronounce and execute a sentence.

Ver. 13.—"Let him be unto you as a heathen man and a publican." Relegate him to the "*world*" "*without*," to which he really belongs. Yet there God will "*judge*" him, as one of "*those without*," by my sentence (ver. 5), which will still operate on him "*in the world*" if so be that he may repent and, at least "in *spirit*," be found amongst those "*within*" once more, "in the day of the Lord Jesus."

*HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Whole Chapter.*

I. **The dishonour of the Church** (vers. 1, 2).
II. **The discipline of the Church** (vers. 3-5).
III. **The duty of the Church towards its Lord** (vers. 6-8).
IV. **The duty of the Church towards the outside world** (vers. 9-13).

I. 1. How early manifested the *impossibility* of making *the Church*, as men reckon its census, *comprise exactly the same persons*, neither more nor fewer, *as* does the *Church* whose census Christ takes! The distinction between the Real and the Nominal; between the Church which is by spiritual union His Body and the Church which is only a baptized Community holding, generally, the same Creed. As if the very Church institution itself were "made subject to vanity" (Rom. viii. 20), like all other creaturely, earthly life; "vanity" being, for the creature, "thwarted development, stunted growth, subjection to something worse than perishableness, bondage to something worse than decay" (Ellicott, *Dest. of the Creature*, lect. i.); or as the word radically suggests, "A yearning after an ideal, often nearly attaining, yet somehow doomed always to miss." The Master foretold it: the tares spring up amongst the wheat; the bad fish are caught in the sweep of the drag-net of the Gospel invitation; at least one guest without a wedding garment sits down at table with the rest, hoping to enjoy the feast. It is a long way from the Church of (say) Eph. ii. 1-10 to the Church in Corinth, amongst whose members was this flagrant sinner. He will never join a Church who waits for a perfect one. 2. *How serious the dishonour to the Church itself!* No grave looks so black as that which yawns dark, with new-fallen, untrodden snow around its mouth. Sin is never so black as when its darkness and corruption open dark in the midst of a Church. It is high honour to belong to Christ; but the honour brings commensurate responsibility. God's appeal is: "*Ye shall be holy*, **for** *I am holy*" (Lev. xi. 44; 1 Pet. i. 16). ["**For**" means: (1) *Vindicate your relationship to Me;* show the "family likeness," which is holiness; for your own sake, that your "evidence" may be strengthened. (2) *Remember the honour* of being Mine. Your character involves Mine; the world will judge of Me and of religion by you. I am holy; take care *therefore* that you are holy, in friendships, pleasures, bearing, character, all. (3) *Make possible the communion* I desire and design for you. But you must needs, *then*, be holy, for I am holy.] Here is a Church involved by one of its members in sin almost unheard of, and always abhorred, in the world. *The Church sinks lower than the world!* Often its reproach still. Business men complain that "if they find a shabby thing done, a Church does it," etc. They are not always too just to the Church. Yet more is rightly expected than from the world. But too much is sometimes expected; no fair allowance is made for fallible judgments, and for the almost inevitable complication arising from corporate, committee action, rather than personal. Often difficult to bring evidence sufficient for action in a Church court. Yet the Church should pique herself upon her honour; should make a point of being extra careful, especially in dealing with finance, or with sin within its own membership. "You carry Cæsar and his fortunes;" "You carry Christ and His character." 3. And if *the Church connive at* or, [as some here understand] defend and glory in, the wrong, *how much greater* the dishonour. It is a sign of bad health when evil is tolerated; it means that zeal, watchfulness, love, purity, all, are low. May mean, in some cases, a wicked regard for a "respectable," "important" offender. Health shows always in a sensitive repugnance to, recoil from, resistance of, evil. Flings it off, as a hand tosses off the burning coal. Instinctively shrinks with pain from even mental touch with it. A healthy body has no rest until it has expelled the very last piece of diseased bone. "Canst not

bear them that are evil," is put by Christ in the forefront of the good things He says (and says *first*) about, and to, Ephesus (Rev. ii. 2). Happy when some voice, friendly, like Paul's, becomes a kind of *objective* conscience, saying from without what the *subjective* conscience ought to be saying from within. Shame when the reproach of the unfriendly world has to awaken or educate the conscience of the Church! 4. A real difficulty, often felt, was not existent here. There was no room to doubt about the fact, or about the character of the fact. "Such a thing ought *absolutely* never to be heard of in connection with the Church; and *absolutely* nothing else is heard of" [so Stanley; but perhaps rather, "This is *absolutely* heard of everywhere"]. Many blemished in Christian character, or strongly, though not with too much discrimination, animadverted upon by the world, can scarcely be touched by Church discipline. Very elementary organizations, in their early days of small numbers and intimate mutual knowledge, can keep closer watch over each other, and can prudently suspend or cast out, for causes not wisely to be touched, or clearly to be judged upon, by larger, complex communities. Sin is a subtle thing, and the measure of responsibility is not always easy to gauge, for admonition or formal sentence. Tares and wheat are at some stages not easy to distinguish. This is not to condone criminal negligence, or weakness, or unfaithfulness to the Holy Ideal of a Church. The obligation lies to carry the practicable to the furthest reach of exactitude. Whenever a fair chance offers, as at Corinth—case clear, evidence abundant—not a moment's hesitation should be permitted. *To act*, promptly, definitely, is *due to the world, and to Christ.* Wherever possible the Church should avowedly stand clear of all complicity with sin. Could here proceed safely, even upon "common report." 5. A Church should "*mourn*" over sin. No amount of gifts, wealth, knowledge, numerical importance, *prestige*, can outweigh the dishonour. No room, no time, for complacent dwelling upon these, whilst sin remains uncondemned. Evil entering, spreading, infecting within, outweighs in seriousness of importance any material, social, numerical advantage. The first question should be, "Are we a holy people?" In days of weakness or decline, the first thing to do is to look for, confess, cast out, Church or personal sin. Joshua learned that there were *times when it is of no avail to pray over defeat* (Josh. vii. 10). "Get thee up (from the attitude of prayer); wherefore liest thou upon thy face? . . . Up; sanctify the people." First purification, then prayer, then success. The Church must purge itself from its dishonour. How to proceed? As in II.

II. **The discipline of the Church.**—The constitution and procedure of a Church court. Admirably expository of Matt. xviii. 19, 20, with its significant "*For.*" [Twice, twice only, did Christ use His own new name, His "**Church**" (Matt. xvi. 18, xviii. 17). In first case referring to dangers from without; in second to difficulties arising within. Matt. xviii. 19 true, and fully applicable to *all* Church gatherings, but *primarily deals with disciplinary gatherings* (*e.g.* about an "offending brother").] Notice:—

1. The fundamental thing: "*in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" [In Matthew (*ubi supr.*) lit. "*unto the name.*" Here, "*in.*" "*Unto*" pictorially sets forth the gathering together toward it, as the central point and rallying-place and object of their assembling. Here the movement towards is over; the Church is assembled "*in the name.*"] This differentiates the gathering from all other meetings of Christian men. Two meet in street; talk of business, family, etc.; no difference between such a meeting and that of many worldly men round them. They meet in Parliament, or on boards of societies, even philanthropic; but their meeting even thus is not a gathering of the Church. But, so soon as they meet "*unto His name*," and as long as they meet "*in His name*," then a distinctively Church assembly is constituted,—if even of "two or three,"—

having all the character, privileges, prerogatives, which belong to the Church. Worship, or business, begins when "His name" is made definitely the object of the gathering. [Cf. the ways of formally opening courts of judicature. In Russia a small, crowned baton lies by the magistrate, who sits under a portrait of the Czar. He sets this baton on end, by his side. That is the emperor come to judgment: "The court is sitting."] That Head of the Church, who is revealed by "His name," is the fountain of authority and wisdom in action. "Where two or three are gathered, . . . there am I; (*and therefore*) what they agree on earth to ask shall be done of My Father."

2. *This carries with it authority to judge, and "power"* (ver. 3) *to execute sentence.*—The "*power*" of the Lord Jesus Himself is there. If "*he that hath done this thing*" is visited with judicial sickness by Paul and the assembled Church (for the "*spirit*" of Paul is assembled with those who are gathered together [in counting those present *don't leave out* Paul and the Lord Jesus Christ, both are really there]), it is "this name, through faith in His name, hath made this man" sick (cf. the reversed parallel of Acts iii. 16. Paul might have said, "Why look ye on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to" sicken?) [All this is normal, except the presence of Paul "in spirit," presumably in order, by his special Apostolic, miracle-working gift, to inflict the extraordinary, abnormal sentence. The rest is essential to every true gathering, in due Church meeting assembled. The "Name of their Lord" is their "objective." Around It they gather. It gives the meeting special character, cohesion, unity, for Himself is there amongst them. How often loyal hearts go homeward saying, "We have been very near to our Lord there"!] [Any questions as to the seat of authority to excommunicate, are not to be discussed or decided, with any fairness, upon the facts of an elementary time like this. As the structure of the Church grew more complex, by similar specialisation of organ and function to that seen in nature, the meeting for discipline conveniently became, in principle, a disciplinary "committee" of the Church, variously constituted, either advisory to the whole Church, or the depository of its power and the executive on its behalf. All these are matters of prudential, variable regulation. The only appearance of vital principle is in the fact that Paul makes the sentence his own: "*I have judged.*" The beginning of the *pastoral* office, and prerogative of admitting to, and excluding from, the visible fold. Yet not without the Church, as at least assessors. Perhaps rather as a jury, the pastor being a judge contributing to, and acting upon, their verdict as to the facts. In ultimate analysis, there is no "*power*" except that of the Lord Jesus present in the gathering.]

3. *The sentence was exclusion, with physical accompaniments.*—(1) The very fact of sinning thus flagrantly, revealed a real self-exclusion to have taken place before Church action was taken. Such a man is no real member of the Church, though still on the roll and meeting with brethren, even at the Lord's Table. [May have been really a member at first, but fallen through unwatchfulness and temptation. May have been a name too hastily enrolled; an unfit, not living, stone, in error or ignorance built into the "house" (1 Pet. ii. 5). Or, the "living stone," more likely, may have ceased to grow and live, and so falls out of its place in the living, growing fabric.] (2) So then (*a*) excommunication here is the ascertaining, the public recognition, and the official registration, of a separation which has been already made by the man's own sin, entailing the withdrawal of the "grieved Spirit of God" (Eph. iv. 30). [As, similarly, divorce is only permissible where it recognises and registers a real dissolution of the marriage bond by the sin of one of the parties.] Outside the fold the man is exposed—more directly, and without the help and safeguard of the means of grace, and of the prayers and fellowship of his brethren—to the working of the "lion going

about," apparently able to inflict physical harm. The demonology of Job i., ii. is not lightly to be rejected, harmonising, as it does, with this inspired statement of Paul. Yet here, as there, Satan is but the servant of God, with limited power; and here God's minister to mark His displeasure. If we had known this man, we should probably have seen, or suspected, nothing but a quite natural illness, which we might, or might not, have noticed was coincident with his exclusion from the Church. The Corinthians themselves seem to have had no idea of the moral causes behind the epidemic sickness, and the numerous deaths just now occurring amongst them (xi. 30). (The spiritual, whether good or evil, behind the natural is a pure matter of revelation; but, when revealed, is not an incredible, or unreasonable, explanation of the facts [cf. Trench, *Miracles, in initio*]. In fact, Bible histories stand distinguished from secular accounts of the same facts—whether actual, or such as might be written—in this, that we are in them taken "behind the scenes" and permitted to see God and the spiritual world actively influencing what in all ordinary cases we only see from the natural side. Bible history is a specimen history, analysed and dissected, so that in other, ordinary, cases we may see where to look for, and how to find, the spiritual behind the natural.) It is contemplated by Paul that this man may die, or even would die. The "*flesh*" (more than the *body*?), the seat and instrument of his sin, is to be destroyed [an inexact word, never to be pressed too much]. But the "*spirit*," the part of manhood capable of God, and once in fact illumined and indwelt by the Spirit of God, is to be saved. The man, it is presumed, will be brought to consideration and repentance in his illness: "It was good for me that I was afflicted." "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now," etc. (Ps. cxix. 67). "In the day of the Lord Jesus Christ" he will be found amongst the "saved of Jesus Christ." [Cf. 2 Cor. i. 14; 1 Cor. i. 8; Phil. ii. 16, i. 6 ("*until*"); 2 Tim. i. 12 ("*against*"); 1 Thess. v. 23 ("*in* the coming").] (*b*) The object of excommunication is, *quâ* the Church, the public clearing of it from all suspicion of complicity with, or toleration of, sin, and the securing from dishonour the very name of Christ; *quâ* the offender, to make his conscience see the gravity of sin, to arouse to repentance and to amendment (where opportunity offers), and thus to make possible the way for restored communion with God and man. Must not be vindictive, but judicial, and (if possible) reformatory: hence (*c*) The method, extends only to exclusion from formal connection and from privileges of membership; but not to any attempt to follow a man outside with any direct infliction of temporal, or social, or personal penalties (vers. 12, 13 apply also to an excluded "brother"). Any consequences that follow exclusion should only be of God's own infliction, generally in the ordinary course of His chastening providence. [Paul's action in this case was rather the action *of God*, by His specially accredited and empowered messenger, than anything analogous to the ordinary action of *the Church*. No precedent in it for ecclesiastical power attempting to pursue into the secular sphere the life, goods, family, of an offender; least of all, of an offender against "doctrine" only.] This is a good case of "*binding*"; as 2 Cor. ii. 7 is of "*loosing*."

III. **Duty of the Church towards its Lord.**—1. *The exodus of the new Israel is now in progress.*—In transit from Egypt to Canaan. A very real deliverance has been accomplished. The old bondage has been broken (Rom vi. 14, "Sin shall not have dominion over you"). We have had our song of deliverance by the Red Sea. We have had our Sinai, only now the law is written within, on our own hearts. We shall have our Canaan (Heb. iv. 9). A day of redemption lies behind us; another, more complete, "day of redemption" before us (Eph. iv. 30). [Divine history *repeats* itself; or, reversing order of thought, *anticipates* itself. The history of Redemption, extending through the ages, has special points at which it summarises itself, on a small scale gathering up all

the essential features of the whole process. The Author, both of the Facts and of the Record of them, traced the earlier stages or embodiments of Redemption on lines which are the basal lines of the later, more fully detailed, perfect stage and embodiment in the historical Work of Christ and the founding and history of His Church. This is not a mere happy adaptation of a piece of ancient history (or of a pretty myth of the past). It is one of the thousand illustrations, which gather year by year with cumulative force of evidence to every student of the Bible, of the profound internal harmony, arising from the organic unity, of the Redemption record. This is a case of the authentic discovery and development of the full meaning of the old story and Deliverance. We are thus told, on His own authority, what God "had in His view" in the earlier incidents. The Passover and Exodus (like all in Creation, Col. i. 16) were "created *in Christ.*" His own warrant for this is abundant: "The blood of the new covenant" (the blood of the *old*, Exod. xxiv. 8); His cross is the uplifting of the serpent (John iii. 14); He is the manna (*ib.* vi. 32, 33); a pillar of fire to His people ("followeth Me shall not walk in darkness," *ib.* viii. 12); the water from the rock (*ib.* vii. 38); [as He is also Jacob's ladder, *ib.* i. 51; and John finds Him in a trivial regulation about the integrity of the body of the Paschal Lamb, xix. 36; Exod. xii. 46; Ps. xxxiv. 20]. [Not in pre-resurrection days, but afterwards, when all time or occasion for (alleged) *ad homines* arguments from, and use of, the Old Testament Scriptures had passed away, and He spoke as having already begun the eternal life of the Incarnate Son, He found Himself in all the Scriptures (Luke xxiv. 27, 43-47)].] All the points of prerogative, distinction, privilege, of the Old Israel reappear in the New, purified from their temporary, pedagogic accompaniments. We have a sanctuary and a Shekinah (John i. 14, ii. 21. N.B. when its fleshly veil was rent, the accompanying type had its veil rent too); we have a Sabbath; we have the "circumcision of Christ" (Col. ii. 11); we have our "altar" (Heb. xiii. 10). So **we have a Passover lamb** and a Passover supper, the birthday "*feast*" of the New Israel. (See Appended Note from Fairbairn.) [Fairbairn, *Typology*, ii. 442 *sqq.*, very full here. The Passover lamb must not be denied to be a real *sacrifice* in any fear of giving support to "high" doctrine *re* the Lord's Supper. Twice God calls it "sacrifice" (Exod. xxiii. 18, xxxiv. 25).] In its combination of *sacrifice* for release from bondage, of atoning sacrifice for sin, and of *feast* for sustenance on pilgrimage, it best (better than even the ordinary *peace offering*) exhibits the whole truth about the Passover character of Christ and His work. The Cross and the Supper combine to exhibit the same whole truth for us. "*Is slain.*" Then why remain in bondage, with the door open to go out?

2. *One emphatic law of the old ordinance is in principle continued unrepealed.* —"*No leaven with the Passover.*" The sprinkling of the blood was not certainly continued in the post-Exodus celebrations. The bitter herbs and the rigorous search for leaven were essential, and continued, with increased stringency of observance, to the last. [Good reason for thinking that, like the modern Samaritan Passover lamb, that of Paul's day was roasted on a *cruciform* spit of wood. But no Divine ordaining in this, so far as we know.] The Passover must not be killed "*upon* leaven" (so Exod. xxxiv. 25, literally). "The putting away of the leaven, that there might be the use only of unleavened bread, may also be regarded as carrying some respect to the circumstances of the people at the first institution of the feast. . . . But there can be no doubt that it mainly pointed, as already shown in connection with the meat offering, to holiness in heart and conduct, which became the ransomed people of the Lord—the incorrupt sincerity and truth that should appear in all their behaviour. Hence, while the bitter herbs were only to be eaten with the lamb itself [as the tears of repentance belong only to the first stage of the spiritual life, the first appropriation of Christ

as the soul's deliverer from bondage and from guilt], the unleavened bread was to be used through the whole seven days of the feast—the primary sabbatical circle—as a sign that the religious and moral purity which it imaged was to be their abiding and settled character. It taught in symbol what is now directly revealed, when it is declared that the end for which Christ died is that He might redeem to Himself a people who must put off the old man with his evil deeds, and be created anew after the image of God" (Fairbairn). "**Sin is a malignant leaven**—(1) In its *nature*; corrupting, spreading, assimilating; (2) *In its effects* upon communities, upon individuals. It **works**—(*a*) constantly; (*b*) imperceptibly; (*c*) powerfully; (*d*) perniciously" (J. L., adapted). Preparation for partaking of Christ's salvation at all involves this. No saving faith is possible where sincere repentance, and (as opportunity serves) "works meet for repentance," are not found. Many a seeker looks for peace in vain. He has not put away sin. He may not share in the Passover deliverance. The true preparation for approaching the Lord's Table is a careful examination of heart and life, carrying with us the "candle of the Lord," searching into every suspected, dark place. To turn away from what *might* possibly lead to an unwelcome discovery, *lest*, seeing something too clearly, conscience should constrain us to yield it up, whereas we do not wish to see that obligation, is moral dishonesty; there is something of the "leaven" in it; everything should be "faced out," swept out, renounced, before we sit down at Table with our Lord in His Supper [*e.g.* any unforgiving temper towards some fellow-communicant]. We have here a rule of our habitual Christian life. Our Exodus is always in progress. We live in a continuous Passover-tide and a continuous Pentecost, as hereafter we shall celebrate a continuous Feast of Tabernacles. [See the symbolism of Tabernacles in Rev. vii. 9.] We belong to a people of whose whole life this is one "note," "*Ye are unleavened.*" Our whole life is a perpetual "*keeping of the feast.*" To retain the initial deliverance of our life, to enjoy a perpetual communion with our Lord, to have His Supper continually celebrated with our heart (Rev. iii. 20), there must be a perpetual self-cleansing from the leaven, a self-examination for it, an unsparing outsweeping of all. Holiness, perfected holiness (2 Cor. vii. 1), is the *norm* of the life of deliverance by, and of communion with, the dying, living, atoning, life-sustaining, Passover Lamb of our age, "*even Christ.*" We have here a rule of the habitual Church life. "No leaven tolerated." Seek it out; watch for it; cast it, cast *persons*, out with unsparing strictness of discipline. If the Church is to be an Israel at all, a covenant people of God to-day; if it is not to return in fact to the world, out of whose Egypt God "has called" both "His Son" and His Church (Matt. ii. 15); if there is to be a Table in the midst of its gatherings at which the Head will join His members at the Supper; if they are to have Him present in their assemblies for discipline or worship,—let them purge away Sin, personal or corporate. (*Heart*-sin above all, ver. 8.)

3. *Happy consequences of such purification.*—(1) "*We keep the Feast,*—the **Feast!** *A festival life ours*, if we will. Our slain Lamb is, between us and God, a perpetually renewed pledge of a life of liberty, larger and larger, from all bondage, and fear, and guilt, and danger, and sin. (2) "*We are a new lump.*" [Figure changes as between this and ver. 7. Rather here, as in Matt. xiii. 33, the pervasive, assimilating effect of leaven, without the evil connotation.] *The Church can then leaven the world.* Modern science has shown this side of the fermentative process; not only a token or accompaniment of "corruption," the break-up of old combinations of matter when "death" has taken place, but also such a break-up by means of a host of minute organisms working towards new combinations, suitable for the sustenance, or to be the vehicle, of new life. For this, in part, does the Lord of the Church put It into the midst of the World. The world is to be saved *mediately*, through the Church [which actually fastened

upon the corrupting, dissolving elements of society in the Roman Empire, and rearranged and reorganised them, to be the abode of the new Christianised life]. Every sinful member, every sinful practice, tolerated, robs the "*new lump*" of its efficiency for the Lord's purpose. To purge out the old leaven [*e.g.* by excommunication] **is Duty towards the Church's Lord,** who is the slain Passover Lamb always in its midst.

IV. **The duty of the Church towards the outside world.**—1. *Observe the sharp distinction,* "*within,*" "*without,*" and this not as a mere accident of attachment to a society or community or non-attachment; goes deeper—"*brethren,*" "*the world.*" It lies in the very word ἐκκλησία, they who are of the Church are not only "called," but "called *out.*" [Admirably analogous to the classical, political use of the word: "The lawful assembly in a free Greek city of all . . . possessed of the rights of citizenship, for the transaction of public affairs, . . . summoned *out of* the whole population; a large, but at the same time a select, portion of it, including neither the populace, nor strangers, nor yet those who had forfeited their civic rights" (Trench, *Syn.*, § 1).] In a world where all nations are God's, one nation was called to His side to be His "peculiar people" (Tit. ii. 14; from Deut. vii. 6, etc.; cf. 1 Pet. ii. 9; Isa. xli. 9). "His *very* own" where all are "His own." Children, where the rest are at best only servants, though all are of His household, and all regarded with real interest and care. An inner circle of love and favour and blessing. 2. The boundary, dividing, inclusive, *exclusive,* line is not always easy to locate. The general direction of it, the principles upon which it is laid down, are obvious and clear, but it is difficult to allot individuals as "without" or "within." The line is by no means coincident with that traced by Church enrolment and discipline. All methods of Church membership, actual or proposed, are obnoxious to the criticism that they exclude some who are really "within," and, far more frequently, include, admit, retain, many of those "without." To eye of Son of Man "sheep" and "goats" are definitely distinguishable. None belongs to neither. ["Yes; I know about the 'sheep' and the 'goats.' But what about the 'alpacas'? These are my difficulty," said half-jestingly, half-seriously, a man of the world.] As a rule, the true line lies *within* the mapped line of the ecclesiastical geography, *sometimes far within.* [As the map-makers say, there is an "Ecclesia *Proper*" and an "Ecclesian World"; cf. "China *Proper*" and "Chinese Empire," half attached, loosely held, slightly ruled; "Russia *Proper*" and the vague "Russia in Asia" or "Russian Empire."] 3. Tests nevertheless are very definite, many-sided. (*a*) *E.g.* put experimentally; take two men, closely paral'el in life; difficult to lay finger on anything "wrong" in the man "of the world"; admirable, amiable, excellent in many ways; "comparing (so it is said) favourably with some of the Church," "better man than your 'converted' man." Unhappily true sometimes; yet go back, dig down to the foundation of both lives. The less admirable (pity !) has behind him a time when he first felt "conviction of sin" [the introduction to a new world, of "things spiritual," to which the (best type of) "natural" man is a stranger]; knows himself "a sinner"; did then, and still does, make Christ and His work the basis of all life and hope before God. The more admirable, building a far better superstructure, has no such event, no such moral crisis, no such beginning of new, Spirit-taught knowledge; does not understand "sin," nor himself "a sinner"; underneath the life-building there is no Christ for a sole reliance. (*b*) Illustrate by this: Before the knowledge of the mechanism of (the newly invented) clocks had travelled from Germany into Italy, the advantages of a public, far-visible dial with hands was so obvious, that many Italian cities set these up; the hands were kept right, by constant adjustment, by an attendant provided with a water-clock or sand-glass. Such "correct time" is the ideal and method of the righteousness of those "*without.*" [Was

very much the righteousness of an Israelite. Was exactly the "righteousness of scribes and Pharisees."] [It is possible to secure any number of *right acts* by right regulation from without, according to an external code, which must be very detailed, a code of "cases of conscience," with new rules for every case that arises.] Italy very soon learned to keep the hands right by mechanism within, in much more exact and perfect fashion, as right at the seconds as at the hours. God secures from within "correct time," righteousness of life, in those "*within*"; a new law and a new force are put into the heart. Sometimes a less perfect "time" is kept (pity!), but at least the true method is being made the basis of life. [Or, changing figure a little, in a man "*within*" the hands go, not too regularly, but at least in right direction now, and in obedience to a new law and power within.] (*c*) Most absolutely: What is the end of life? What is its relation to Christ? To the man "*within*," "**To live is** (more or less definitely and faithfully) **Christ**." The real, deep, fundamental test is there: what is the relation of the heart and the activities to Christ? Even when both men do what appears identically same thing, a "great gulf fixed" of distinction opens up underneath, in reply to that question.

2. *Intercourse between "within" and "without," how regulated.*—(1) Sad that it should need "regulation." A sad tone rings through the Scripture use of "world." A sadness as of a father who must forbid intercourse between some of his children and the rest; the tone in which, if mentioned at all, one is spoken of whose picture hangs with its face to the wall, in the home. Why cannot "church" and "world," "within," "without," mingle freely, fraternise without "regulation" and "restriction"? "What is wrong with the world? Is it not God's world? Surely it is not the devil's?" True; and all the beauty, etc., is for the children of God: "all yours" (see iii. 22). The history of the world [both as κόσμος and αἰών] is flowing in a channel of God's digging, and towards God's destination for it. Yet the word is ethical; the "world" is not friendly, or neutral, but alienated, inimical, dangerous. The "world" is the *worldly* world, in the New Testament, and in fact. (See Appended Note from Trench.) (2) *Some* intercourse is *necessary*. The division-line parts "chief friends," husband and wife; runs through the midst of homes, friendly circles, groups of relatives; through offices, schools, workshops, markets; parting, sorting out, individuals "right" and "left." Christianity does not command any forced or unnatural breaking of these bonds; "*then must ye needs go out of the world.*" [N.B. this said as though monastic, eremitic, celibate segregation were not at all a thing to be contemplated for Christians. To argue this from his words were a *reductio ad absurdum*; so Paul feels.] The world wants, God wants, the Church *in* the world, the Christian *in* the home, in the market, *on* the bench, on the board, in the seat in Parliament. Is there not a danger to the man "*within*"? Yet it may be a training and a blessing; is meant to be a blessing to those "*without.*" Even Christian benevolence will mean much intercourse. (3) *Much more* is *voluntary*, and should be modelled after the pattern of Christ's own. ["*Ye are not of the world*, **even as** (*i.e.* in the same way as, and with the same absoluteness of negation) *I am not*" (John xvii. 19). Examine His "unworldliness."] (*a*) John Baptist was Elijah in his ascetic aloofness from men; Christ was Elisha in His free intercourse with men. Christ accepted invitations from, ate at table of, Pharisee, publican, sinner (though He was most "at home" at Bethany). But always went in and bore Himself there *as the Physician.* When the Christian man finds he can do no good, and may himself suffer harm (Christ could not suffer any), he must abstain altogether or withdraw. (*b*) Deep separateness of origin ("*of* the world," "not *of*") is the true safeguard for the Christian, the true source of any power for good, in any voluntary intercourse. There should be no sympathy of aim, or

community of judgment; no participation, in business or pleasure, which *indicates*, or *ministers* to, worldliness of temper, spirit, heart. [Rom. xii. 1-3, "*conformity*" may indicate, or assist, an evil *metamorphosis*. A holy *metamorphosis* within will save from any wrong "*conformity*" without.] (*c*) This affects intimacies, friendships, amusements, marriage.

3. *Duty of Church towards world.*—(1) To endeavour to fulfil all the purposes for which God calls *out* a Church, and yet leaves it *in* the world. The very separateness is a witness for God; instrumentally it may "convict the world of sin." [As a straight-edge convicts a hand-drawn line, when laid down beside it.] Hence (2) Should "*judge*" those "*within*" with unsparing faithfulness. Sin in the world must often be left alone, though condemned by testimony and practice. Sin in the Church must be vigorously, promptly, dealt with. (3) Should not attempt to *judge* those without. [No question of passing mental or conscientious "judgment." Cannot help having an opinion, passing a judgment, upon the right or wrong of the life or character of those without. Folly to say, "You should not judge so strictly, should not judge at all." The awakened sense of "righteousness" and of "sin" makes a mental, moral verdict a necessity. Bad sign of the Church's own life if it did not "*judge*" and "*condemn*" the world's life and principles. All such "judgments" are of course fallible, on (necessarily) imperfect *data*; a Christian man will be modest, self-diffident, only condemning severely under the strongest compulsion of evident fact. Not this, but] the Church should not attempt any sort of punitive discipline upon the outside community. [As the "*world*" should have no disciplinary power within the Church.] The sphere of "the State" is crime in the citizen—Christian or non-Christian; the sphere of the Church is sin in the member. The attempt in Puritan England and Puritan New England to use Church machinery, or Church methods and code, to enforce a Church discipline upon the morals and liberties of even those "without," broke down. As things are we must leave sin in those "*without*" to the "judgment" and chastisement of God. The world cannot yet be made a theocracy. It is a difficult, delicate question, needing all the sense and grace a Christian father and mother possess and can obtain, how far the home may be made a little theocracy, how far the Christian should *enforce* upon non-Christian children or servants, the Christian rule of life and its sanctions, so "judging those without."

## *HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.*

Ver. 7. "Christ our Passover," etc. I. The Victim. II. The Sacrifice. III. Its efficacy. IV. Its appropriation.—[*J. L.*]

Vers. 7-9. Observe the necessity of: I. Repentance. II. Faith in Christ. III. A holy life.—[*J. L.*]

Vers. 7-9. *Our Christian Life a Perpetual Passover-keeping.*—A continuous entering into liberty from Egyptian bondage, into a journey homewards with God for our Guide. Three features always stamped upon it:—

I. **The cleansing of the heart.**—Must "make ready the upper room," if Christ is to enter and sup with us, as the perpetual benediction of our life. Not done once for all in the repentance which inaugurated our new life. New discoveries as we carry the candle into the darker corners. We get a keener eye to see "leaven," as years go on.

II. **Slaying the lamb.**—This done once for all, but not then done with. The Atonement a perpetually new basis of each new day's life of grace. However high we raise the superstructure, yet this the foundation always. Even in heaven we shall be only sinners whose ground of acceptance is the merit of the slain Lamb. [Too often there is a long parenthesis

in the midst of life's journey—as in the wilderness sojourn of Israel—during which no Passover is celebrated. All the sense of believing rest in the work of the Lamb of God, all the practical efficacy of it in our life, is gathered up around the start on the journey and the eve of entering Canaan; a long, barren, unbelieving, unfaithful tract stretches between.]

III. **Eating the supper.** — This characteristic also to be stamped upon the whole Christian course. Not only a continuous resting upon an atonement which brings deliverance from bondage, but a continuous "peace-offering" feast, a continuous communion with Him who is the Victim, the Supper, the Host at the table—all in one.

Ver. 13. The judgment of the Church and the judgment of God. I. One limited; other universal. II. Partial; absolute. III. Disciplinary; judicial. IV. May err; infallible. V. Provisional; final. VI. Temporary in effects; eternal.—[*J. L.*]

Vers. 9-13. (*a*) I. *In* the Church; not *of* the Church. II. *In* the world; not *of* the world.

Or (*b*) I. Separation from the Church. II. Separateness from the world.

## *APPENDED NOTES.*

Ver. 2.—Farrar thinks that they were "*puffed up*" and "*boasted*" *about this very matter.* "Though the very Pagans execrated this atrocity, yet he had not been expelled from the Christian communion, nor even made to do penance in it, but had found brethren ready, not merely to palliate his offence, but actually to plume themselves upon leaving it unpunished. This man seems to have been a person of distinction and influence, whom it was advantageous to a Church, largely composed of slaves and women, to count among them." (*Query, all this?*) "Doubtless (?) this had facilitated his condonation, which may have been founded on some Antinomian plea of Christian liberty; or on some Rabbinic notion that old ties were rendered non-existent by the new conditions of a proselyte" (*something in this*); "or by peculiarities of circumstance unknown to us. But though this person was the most notorious, he was by no means the only offender, and there were Corinthian Christians—even many of them—who were impenitently guilty of uncleanness, fornication, and lasciviousness" (1 Cor. v. 11, vi. 15-18, x. 8, xv. 33, 34). (Farrar, *St. Paul, in loc.*)

Ver. 7.—"Another and still higher element of prophetical import mixed with that singular work of God, which gave rise to the institution of the Passover. For the earthly relations then existing, and the operations of God in connection with them, were framed on purpose to represent and foreshadow corresponding but increasingly superior ones connected with the work and kingdom of Christ. And as all adverse power, though rising here to its most desperate and malignant working, was destined to be put down by Christ, that the salvation of His Church might be finally and for ever accomplished, so the redemption from the land of Egypt, with its ever-recurring memorial, necessarily contained the germ and promise of what was to come; the lamb perpetually offered to commemorate the past pointed the expecting eye of faith to the Lamb of God, one day to be slain for the yet unatoned sins of the world; and only when it could be said, 'Christ, our passover has been sacrificed,' did the purpose of God, which lay enclosed as an embryo in the Paschal institution, reach its proper culmination."—*Fairbairn*, "*Typology*," ii. 445.

Ver. 10. *The World.*—"(There are no [passages] which speak of the end of the κόσμος). . . . From the signification of κόσμος as the material world, which is not uncommon in Scripture (Matt. xiii. 35; John xxi. 25; Rom. i. 20), follow that of κόσμος as the sum total of the men living in the world (John i. 29, iv. 42; 2 Cor. v. 19); and then upon this, and ethically, those out of the ἐκκλησία, the alienated from the life of God (John i. 10; 1 Cor. i. 20, 21; Jas. iv. 4; 1 John iii. 13). . . . Αἰών, . . . signifying time, comes presently to signify all which exists in the world under conditions of time; and then, more ethically, the course and current of this world's affairs. But this course and current being full of sin, it is nothing wonderful that '*this world*' (αἰών) like κόσμος, acquires presently in Scripture an evil significance. . . . All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, at any time cur-

rent in the world, which it is impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitute a most real and effective power, being the moral, or immoral, atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale,—all this is included in the *αἰών*, which is, as Bengel has expressed it, the subtle informing spirit of the *κόσμος*, or world of men who are living alienated and apart from God." Both words united in Eph. ii. 2: "*the age of this world.*" "The *God* of this world," 2 Cor. iv. 4; its anti-God. The "*age*" is the *rule* of the life of the men of the "*world*" (Eph. ii. 2, *κατά*). They are "men of the time," that and nothing more.—*Trench*, "*Syn.*," § lix.

## CHAPTER VI.

### *CRITICAL NOTES.*

TWO SECTIONS; TWO TOPICS.—Vers. 1-8, 9-20.

Vers. 1-8.—Canon Evans (*Speaker's Commentary*) thus exhibits the verbal connection: "Deigneth any one of you (*you* emphatic), having a matter anent the other (party), to seek for judgment before the wrong-doers and not before the saints? (Are ye so besotted), or do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if in your presence the world is to be judged, unmeet are ye to hold judge-courts of the lowest sort? Do ye not know that angels we shall judge—*angels!* Speak not of secular things! Nay, rather (that I may unmask your folly by a *reductio ad absurdum*), if secular judge-courts ye should perchance hold (a measure how unworthy of your kingly calling and of your future judicial *status* !), take men of utterly no account in the Church and set them on the bench! (*Them*, I say, for such nonentities are equal to the settlement of such trivialities.) To put you to shame I speak it (this last sentence serious, not satirical). So! is there not among you (wise men as you flaunt yourselves) not even one wise man who shall be competent to arbitrate (give a decision) on the part of his brother? But brother with brother goes to law (which is a breach of charity) and sues for judgment at the bar of unbelievers (which is preposterous). Nay, verily (let alone the absurd length of appealing to heathen men), it is so far quite a defeat to you that you have cause for legal judgments between yourselves. . . . Why do ye not rather take wrong (than allow or give cause for this *ratio ultima* of legal judgment)? Why not submit to being defrauded? Nay, but (the very reverse, so far from taking wrong dealt) you deal wrong yourselves, and (what makes it worse) deal wrong to brethren! (Is this possible?) or do ye (with all your boasted knowledge) not know that wrong-doers (of any sort) shall not inherit God's kingdom?" To this may be added:—

Ver. 1. **Dare.**—*Q.d.* "What is this that I hear of you? Is it really possible?" Bengel: "Grandi verbo notatur *læsa majestas* Christianorum." Connect with the "judging" at end of chap. v.: "I do not yet, as a Christian, judge the world; I shall do some day, and even judge angels. I understand a Christian, and can judge him (ver. 12); I do not yet always understand the man of the world; God does, and shall judge him." **Unjust.**—Not necessarily meaning *doing injustice* on the bench. (Cf. the fair character of Gallio.) Perhaps not more than *unrighteous*, as opposed to "*saints*" (in a half-technical sense, like "*sinners* of the Gentiles," Gal. ii. 15).

Ver. 2.—Observe the estimate of secular things: "*the smallest matters.*" Cf. "*that which is least*" (Luke xvi. 10, expounded by vers. 8 and 11) = worldly wealth and honour, in many cases. **By you.**—Lit. *in* you; as, "*in* that Man" (Acts xvii. 31).

Ver. 3. (**Evil**) **angels.**—No hint that the good need to submit to a "judgment." (See Jude 6, 7, 8; also the saints glorifying God's judgments, Rev. xix. 3.)

Ver. 4.—Choose between (*a*) "*set*" (imperative) and (*b*) "*ye set*" (indicative). Also between two meanings of "*them . . . least esteemed* in the Church"; (*c*) "the 'nobodies' of your membership"; or (*d*) "the secular judges, who, being secular, men of the world, are, in the eyes of the members of the Church, and in comparison with themselves, of no account." (*d*) Highly improbable. Adopt (*a*) and (*c*); half-ironical counsel.

Ver. 5.—As usual meaning "to your shaming," "that I may arouse your sense of shame."

Ver. 7. **Fault.**—A *falling away* from the ideal of the dignity of being Christians, and from the ideal of brotherly love, essential to the character.

TRANSITIONAL SECTION.—Vers. 9-11.

Ver. 9.—Query, is the particular "*wrong*" and "*defrauding*" in vers. 8, 9 connected with 2 Cor. vii. 12, the case of "the incestuous person"? Had the father been ready to appeal to a secular court for redress? Some such connection would explain the transition in this verse from "litigation" to "fornication." [In 2 Cor. vii. 2 Paul uses in negatived connection with himself "wrong" and "defraud."] N.B., like Rom. i. 24 *usque ad finem*, this chapter gives a significant glimpse of the every-day corruption of the heathen world, with all the civilization of Greece and Rome. **Effeminate.**—Euphemistic.

Ver. 10.—Note in what company we find "*covetousness*." Stanley suggests a connection between "*thieves*" and the lawsuits (but query?). **Revilers.**—*Virulent, foul* abuse; generally, not always. John ix. 28; Acts xxiii. 4; 1 Cor. iv. 12; 1 Pet. ii. 13; 1 Tim. v. 14; 1 Pet. iii. 9; 1 Cor. v. 11; and here. **Inherit.**—Cf. Matt. xxv. 34; Jas. ii. 5, "*heirs* of the kingdom."

Ver. 11.—Observe "*were . . . were . . . were.*" Partly historical, partly ideal. *In ideal*, Faith, Baptism, Renewal, Separation from sins of old character and life, coincide in time; *in fact*, Baptism may be pre- or post-dated in regard to Faith and Renewal; Separation may very imperfectly accompany the rest. **Justified.**—Protestantism rightly lays stress upon the relative change involved in pardon of sin; makes *this its definition* of Justification (Acts xiii. 38, 39). Yet (*e.g.* Wesley, *Sermons*) "*some rare instances may be found* wherein the terms 'justified' and 'justification' are used in so wide a sense as to include sanctification also; yet in general use they are sufficiently distinguished from each other both by St. Paul and the other inspired writers." Also, cf. Rom. viii. 30, where attention is not so much fixed upon the initial *act* of God as upon the continuously accorded and maintained *status* of the justified man, covering the whole interval from pardon to glory. Also, no careful adherence here to the *ordo salutis* (Calvin, in Ellicott). Observe "*in . . . in.*" Observe "*our* God."

SECOND MAIN TOPIC.—Vers. 12-20.

Ver. 12. **Lawful.**—Here, and in x. 23. To be put in quotation marks, "All . . . lawful." His own words, or something like them, quoted and misused by the Antinomian party. [Cf. the misuse of Christ's actual words, Mark xiv. 58, from John ii. 19.] **Expedient.**—Study Paul's "expediency"; here, x. 23; 2 Cor. viii. 10, xii. 1; Rom. xiv. 13 *sq.* Compare "*All things to all men, that I may . . . save*," ix. 22. (See Appended Homilies, more fully.)

Ver. 13.—Christ ate broiled fish and honeycomb (Luke xxiv. 42) after His resurrection, but only to help affrighted, bewildered disciples to realise that He was not simply a *phantasm*, but a substantial reality.

Ver. 15. **Take.**—"Take "*away*," *q.d.* from Christ to whom they belong and are joined (Evans).

Ver. 16. **Saith he.**—Adam; or "saith *it*," viz. Genesis. In either case notice that the word is regarded as a fundamental, inspired word of *God*.

Ver. 18. **Flee.**—"When a temptation of lust assaults thee, do not resist it by heaping up arguments against it and disputing with it, considering its offers and its danger; but *fly from it*, that is, think not at all of it; lay aside all consideration concerning it, and turn away from it by any severe and laudable thought of business. St. Hierome very wittily reproves the Gentile superstition, who pictured the Virgin Deities armed with a shield and lance, as if chastity could not be defended without war and direct contention. No; this enemy is to be treated otherwise. If you hear it speak, though but to dispute with it, it ruins you, and the very arguments you go about to answer leave a relish upon the tongue. A man may be burned if he goes near the fire, though but to quench his house; and by handling pitch, though but to draw it from your clothes, you defile your fingers" (Jeremy Taylor, *Holy Living*, sect. iii.). He also quotes Augustine: "*Contra libidinis impetum apprehende fugam, si vis obtinere victoriam.*" Observe imperfect tense, *q.d.* "*Flee, and flee*" (Evans). **Every sin.**—Natural to supply, and read, "Every *other* sin." But query? Does he rather put fornication into a category, a *genus*, with but one *species*, and that having but one, unique, abnormal, abhorrent *example*? "Sins" may sufficiently classify and condemn other evil acts. But this? We want another, blacker, more terrible name with which to head its category. Difficulty oftener with "*every*." "Common view . . . that Apostle . . . speaking in general form, that exact words not to be pressed ('*tales sententiæ morales non morose urgendæ*,' Beng.), there being some sins, *e.g.* intemperance, which can hardly be said to be completely *without the body*. The true force of what . . . already said . . . thus seriously weakened: there *is* no sin which is *within the body* in the frightful form in which *fornication* is. By it the whole *body*, inwardly as well as outwardly, is made over to another, and is utterly separated from Christ. . . . Intemperance and self-murder involve acts injuriously affecting the body, yet done . . . from without; but the sin of the *fornicator* . . . is, so to say, within the body, and using it as a direct agent and implement. . . . Fornication is a sin against the personality, in a form and to an extent far beyond that of any other sin of sensuality" (slightly condensed from Ellicott). **Without the body.**—"They

require some motive or weapon other than the body. But this sin stands alone in making the human body, the chosen medium of Christ's self-manifestation to the world, to be itself a sufficient motive and instrument of sin" (Beet). Observe not "*without . . . within*," but "*without . . . against*"; as if others missed, though aimed at; this hits, the body. (So Evans.)

Ver. 19.—This more than "Ye are (collectively) the Temple" (iii. 16).

Ver. 20.—It is an over-subtle, over-pressing, use of idea of ransom to endeavour to fix precisely *to whom price paid*. Analogy of *ransom* only fits serviceably the two ideas,—bought by the new owner, to deliver from an old, to keep for himself, whose new service is (practically) liberty, and is (absolutely) deliverance from old bondage. 1 Pet. i. 19, "*Precious* blood, (even the blood) of Christ." Note particularly the true reading here. Last words to be omitted.

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 1—8.

*The Christian and Litigation.*

I. **Some limitations to an absolute prohibition of Christian appeal to secular courts to be noted.**—1. The State and the Law were not then Christian, but heathen. Case of Corinthian Church not to be compared with condition of things where government, legislation, justice, are affected by, or based on, great principles of Christianity. The parallel case is rather that of two Christians at issue, of whom one, or both, is inclined to drag the matter before a mocking Mahometan *kadi*, or before an idolatrous, perhaps persecuting, Hindoo prince. In Christendom, at its lowest worth, the "secular" court is, in a sense, an outer Court of the Church, or at least an *annexe*. Persecuted English Nonconformists have appealed to English judges, often *Christian* men. 2. The matter in dispute is supposed to be one wholly *between Christian parties*. "A family business;" the family's "dirty linen, *to be washed at home*." Paul himself carried the case, between him *and the Sanhedrin*, before the court of the Emperor Nero. "I *ought* to be judged . . . at Cæsar's judgment seat," viz. before Festus, Cæsar's representative (Acts xxv. 10). The wrong suffered by a Christian at the hands of a non-Christian may *not* be *merely* a *personal* hardship, beginning and ending with the man and the particular case. [In this latter case the Christian had better suffer, especially if the wrong be put upon him *because he is a Christian*. 1 Pet. iv. 19 then applies: "Commit . . . unto a faithful Creator." "The Lord is at hand." Also Matt. v. 38-45: "Resist not evil." "Turn other cheek." "Let . . . have cloke also."] But *Christians may* happen to *represent society*. Vindication of his own purely civil right may be needful for sake of social order. [This rule is to be very reluctantly applied, with earnest prayer and great watchfulness over his spirit, lest self, or anger, or pride, or revenge, insinuate themselves into the public spirit of his appeal to law. Matt. v. 44 very earnestly then to be remembered: "Love . . . enemies. Pray for them that despitefully use you."] 3. Matt. v. 34-37 ("*Swear not at all*. . . . Your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay") applies to an ideal society within an ideal kingdom of God. In practice, in the real, complex, actual social order, Christ (silent before, Matt. xxvi. 63) and Paul (2 Cor. i. 23) did speak upon a confirmatory oath. One general rule explains and justifies: "Whatsoever is more than these *cometh of evil*"; Christians have to do with fallen men and an evil world. In dealing with these, abatement from the ideal is forced upon them in use of litigation in secular courts. *But, within the Church, keep to the ideal.* So here, in this section.

II. Between Christian and Christian, and in "*biotics*" merely (ver. 4), litigation before secular tribunals is to be discouraged [unless as last resort].

1. *It is an insult to the dignity of the Church and its Lord. "Dare you?"*—The thing is treasonable [as when, in the Middle Ages, English law forbade causes to be taken from the King's courts to that of the Pope]. What jurisdiction have the

"*unjust*" and their courts within the kingdom of Christ? And shall it be a Christian who seeks to introduce the foreign jurisdiction? Does Christ's law need confirming or superseding, that you appeal to secular? He has given directions for procedure (Matt. xviii. 15-20). First, "*thee and him alone.*" That failing, *a court of first instance*; "*two or three witnesses.*" That failing, *the supreme court*, the Full "*Church*," presided over by the Lord Himself: "*there am I in the midst.*" They "*agree to ask*" His guidance; their decisions—"*binding*" or "*loosing*"—are His, "bound" or "loosed" "*in heaven.*"

2. *It is unworthy of your own dignity who are resorting to the secular judge.*—*You* seek, and bow to, *his* decisions, who shall one day stand before you and have to bow to your judgment? [An obscure topic as yet. See Beet's note appended. (1) Generally it is the last link of a series of identifications of the saints with their Lord. They "shall be glorified together" (Rom. viii. 17). Crucified, buried, risen, ascended, hid (as He is) in God, enthroned already with Him (Col. iii. 3; Eph. ii. 6), in like manner they are to be brought forth with Him (1 Thess. iv. 14), and to be assessors with Him in judgment. (2) Further, as impossible yet to draw up a coherent, consistent programme of the sub-final Age preceding the Parousia and the General Judgment (and even to adjust all the relations between these two last), as it would have been in Old Testament days to draw up a programme of the First Advent of Christ. Yet collate, tentatively (Dan. vii. 22-27), "Judgment was given to the saints"; Matt. xix. 28 (Luke xxii. 30), "Ye shall sit . . . judging the twelve tribes." In Matt. xxv. the faithful servant is made "ruler"; in Luke xix. 12 *sqq.* (Pounds, not Talents) the faithful servant has "authority over . . . cities." Rev. xxi. 24-26 distinguishes between the nations and their kings (outside) and the New Jerusalem and its citizens (within). Also in Matt. xxv. it is expressly "all the nations" that are arrayed before the Son of Man, and even those set on the right hand are distinguished from "these" to whom their good offices have been rendered. *Are "these" the assessor-saints sitting in judgment with their Lord?*] Whatever may be behind all these mysterious intimations, this is clear: The little Church in Corinth is invested with a dignity elevating it above all earthly greatness. As seen from heaven, the little *nuclei* here and there in the Roman world, of artisans, slaves, Jews, "not many noble," etc., are the distinguished factors in human society. Heaven's eye singles out the Churches as the all-important facts of earth. The Christian man is to disdain outside help and vindication. What can he want higher, better, more authoritative, than a Church tribunal? Moreover, why should he, a peer of the kingdom, submit himself to the nobody, the commoner, outside its pale and honour -perhaps its enemy? Cannot a Christian trust the competency, or at least the brotherly fairness or love, of his brethren? Do not say you cannot have a Church court; nobody to constitute one. [Extreme case on record: an Independent Church died down to three members; two of them, women, expelled for drunkenness, the third, a man.] Brother and brother should submit to brethren. Not secular litigation, but Church arbitration, the first, the favourite, method whenever possible. Respect the brethren, respect yourselves, ye judges of angels! ["All that statesmen, as such, have to do with religion is to be themselves under its power; all that Christians, as such, have to do with the State is to be good citizens" (Dr. Brown, *Horæ Subs.*, Second Series, p. 52).]

3. *It is to degrade the Church and the brother in the eyes of the world.* "*Before the unbelievers!*"—Bad enough that *brother* sues *brother* at all. Even the world has its proverb, "Dog does not eat dog" (cf. Gal. v. 15). It is a sad "*come down*" (ver. 6) from what your spirit ought to be. But it is a sadder, deeper descent when the brotherhood, showing its worst side, is dragged into the eye of an unfriendly, cold world; when passions which ought not to be known within

the Body are obtruded upon the notice of the world,—selfishness defending itself against, or overreaching, selfishness; jealousy, covetousness, partisan feeling, a too eager grasp at the things of a temporal world, and the like. Have no such feelings at all; but *if ye* do *have* cases arising (ver. 4), at least, for shame, keep them from the men of the world.

4. It is *an exaggeration of the importance of the matters at issue.*—Mere "things pertaining to this life," "the smallest matters," are they worth dividing the brotherhood over, and, much more, of dishonouring it before the outside world? If you will have the matter out, I had almost said, find some poor, humble, simple members, and let them judge; they are good enough judges for such business! But there is a better thing still: do not insist on "having it out"! Let it go. [This the meaning of Phil. iv. 5: "*Your moderation.*" "Do not stand too stiffly upon your rights. Yield something of what, in the abstract, is really your due. If there cannot be 'give *and* take,' better that you do all the 'giving,' than hurt, by an insistence which may become obstinacy, and may lead to estrangement, strife, and division, the peace of the Church."] Take wrong; be defrauded. The Lord will see your interests safe. "The meek shall inherit the earth." Why, you are the wrong-doers, the defrauders—**brethren**!

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 9—11.

**I. The kingdom of God.**—1. Observe how the phrase and idea had got cleared in Paul's mind from all the foolish and ridiculous Rabbinical accretions and anticipations of a great temporal monarchy under Messiah, in which, freed from the Roman or other yoke, Israel should be *the* nation, and the Gentile world exist for the sake of the Jew. 2. We have here a case of the true Evolution. (1) Israel had been the kingdom of God on earth. As Babylon was Nebuchadnezzar's, or Egypt was Pharaoh's, or Damascus Rezin's or Hazael's. Jehovah was the only, the real, King of the realm. David, Solomon, etc., were understood to be *only viceroys* under Jehovah. Jehovah's law was State law. Idolatry was treason. Citizens were born into the citizenship [cf. in contrast, John i. 13]; Israel, in the midst of the nations, stood distinguished as the nation of God in the land of God. But it never perfectly realised the idea. The land never was cleared of enemies for Jehovah. The people never did perfectly keep Jehovah's law. They were not satisfied with, or mindful of, the true King Jehovah. At last, when the mob howled wildly around Pilate's judgment seat, "We have no king but Cæsar," came the beginning of the end of even this imperfect embodiment of God's idea. (2) Next, the Church of Christ is made to exhibit "God's kingdom." Again there is a separate people, God's "peculiar people," but of no one nation, located in no one land. The kingdom is wherever a heart is in which Christ is accepted as God's anointed King of His new Israel. "Kingdom of God within you." Every heart won is a new piece of territory added to God's realm on earth. God's "royal," "perfect, law of liberty" (Jas. i. 25, ii. 8) is the State law, and rules the hearts of the citizens of this better setting forth of the "kingdom of God." (3) "Better," but not perfect, or ideal. For that we look to Eternity. Heaven is at last the *idea* of God realised. A people all holy, all happy, in a land without sin or curse; every heart beating pulse and pulse in communion with the King; love to the King the one sufficient, all-embracing law for every subject, written in the heart; God ruling over a race, all His people, dwelling in a world [perhaps "a new earth"] undisputedly His dominion. Thus, as Israel, the Church, the inner Experience of believers, Heaven—God's recovered idea of a "kingdom of God" has progressively been exhibited "in many parts and in many manners"

(Heb. i. 1); each "illustration" traced on the same lines as its predecessor, with additions, modifications, added detail.

II. **Its citizens.**—Not "*the unrighteous.*" 1. Only an absolute exclusion when the kingdom of God is Heaven. Separation made (Matt. xxv. 33, 46). Impossible to conceive of the Holy City admitting "what defileth," etc. (Rev. xxi. 27, xxii. 15); cannot pass the gates. 2. Very imperfectly attempted in Israel. Levitical law had many enactments whose sanction was, "That soul shall be cut off from among the People." But those—never actually enforced to any great extent—missed nearly all forms of "unrighteousness" which did not culminate in overt action. 3. Only partially to be accomplished in the Christian Church. In the sub-Pentecostal, almost ideal, days of the Church, the King vindicated the principle by the cutting off of Ananias and Sapphira [the New Testament analogue of the death of Achan]. But God is not perpetually stepping forth in acts of holy self-vindication against sin in His world or in the Church of His Son. All Church discipline, and forms (or tests) of Church membership, are so many humanly devised, often God honoured, methods of endeavouring to keep out the "unrighteous," or to exclude them when in. But they never can secure more than an approximation to the idea of a kingdom in which no "unrighteous" are found. No method, actual or proposed, ever gets worked with perfect intelligence, or perfect faithfulness; no method of human administration can deal with heart-unrighteousness. 4. There is a perfect, self-acting, discipline of exclusion; a Divine excommunication. Sin means real incapacity for understanding, seeing, entering, the kingdom here; an utter unfitness for heaven, a moral impossibility, hereafter. Sin forfeits justification; the "blood" no longer "cleanses" (1 John i. 7); it negatives the possession of the holiness without some degree of which no man is really regenerate or sanctified, nor can be a child in the family or a citizen of the kingdom. "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit *He taketh away*"; the Vine-dresser's knife executes its sentence of excommunication. The Church must often leave the dead branch still attached to the Vine; or must be ignorant of the fulness of its *death*. "*Be not deceived.*"

III. **Candidates for citizenship.**—1. Who but the "*unrighteous*"? What a catalogue! "*Thieves*," "*effeminate*," "*drunkards*," cannibals, murderers, sinners of every type, degree, age, race! From such the citizens are recruited! No citizen who was not an alien once. [No quarry from which stones cannot be got fit for Christ's building. No stone which cannot be utilised by Him. There is really no other stone than such as this in the building.] (Eph. ii. 1-3, 11-13.) The life-history of every citizen follows the formula, "*Such were you, but ye were washed. . . . Ye are* citizens." 2. To such the kingdom comes by "*inheritance.*" (True now, and true "when the Son of Man shall come in His glory," *ut supra.*) Such became "joint-heirs with Christ" in the possession of the kingdom. By *inheritance*; a concomitant of the new *status*, the new life; so certainly as they are "*washed*," etc., do they inherit. The "*washing*," etc., brings with it, *ipso facto*, an entering into possession. And as certainly by-and-by, with an unbroken sequence, does the "washing," etc., go with the "*inheriting.*" There is no other final goal and resting-place congruous with, and possible for, the renewed citizen life. No entering without a change preceding; no change without the inheritance following.

IV. **The initiation.**—"*Washing*, "*sanctifying*," *justifying.*" (See Critical Notes, above.) Paul not speaking with any theological precision of order. Yet if sanctification be only the *relative* holiness, completed by a "separating" act (cf. i. 2), no necessary difficulty to find it followed by "justification" in the ordinary sense of pardon,—the (forensic) discharge from all liability to penalty on account of a broken law; the two acts of God's grace, separable in thought.

coincide in time. Or, better, remember that the *status* of a justified man is a perpetually renewed grace; underlying all after-developments of the gracious life; assumed as the foundation on which all the superstructure of holiness is reared. Even in heaven, the saint will be there, and will remain there, only as a sinner justified, accepted, for the sake of that "Lamb" in whose "blood" he has trusted for salvation. The *basis* of all is the objective work of that Christ, who is revealed in His name as exactly what He is to, and for, us. On this rests, and rises, the (*subjective*) work of the Spirit of God. As the eruption of the leprosy falls off when the new health courses through the system, so these old, foul sins fall away from the life, when the spiritual health is renewed and becomes full, by the entering and indwelling of the Spirit of God.

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 12—20.

[Direct, public, homiletic use of whole paragraph plainly possible only under exceptional circumstances and within narrow limits. Particular clauses very available and fruitful. May suggest:]

I. **A great principle** (ver. 12). Its limitations.
II. **A great sin** (vers. 18, 15).
III. **A great honour** (vers. 17, 13, 14, 15, 19), of even the body.
IV. **A great ransom** (ver. 20).
V. **A great obligation** (ver. 20).

I. A. *Christianity is liberty.*—1. From old Jewish law, as such; from external law, as the prime principle of action or guide of life. Not a religion of restrictions, external prescriptions; its "law" is the love of the renewed heart. If this were perfect—in proportion as this love advances to being "made perfect" (1 John iv. 17, 18)—so far, and then, obedience is perfect. "Love God with all the heart," "love neighbour as oneself"—these mean, worked out in detail, all piety, all benevolence, taught by the instinct of a renewed heart, needing therefore no command (Rom. xiii. 8, 10). Hence Augustine's bold word, "*Dilige, et quod vis fac.*" 2. In practice, even the growing love still needs the guidance of external command; to guard from mistakes arising from ignorance, and from the half-enlightened instinct; to defend itself against the blinding and bias of indolence, indifference, self-interest, pressure of example or fear. The Jewish law embodied, in temporary forms and in particular instances, principles, permanent and perfectly general, still binding upon Christians; "*under* (even that) *law to Christ*" (ix. 21). The "heart runs in the way of the commandment." Law and liberty, love and life, coincide. 3. Paul had probably said this; but it had been repeated as, "Do what you like." True, as a theory of life, but not as working basis of action. "*What you like*" will be God's law—not less nor more—when perfect love and perfect judgment are found, and in a perfect world. But so long as, in this complex social order, light is scanty, judgment imperfectly cleared, love only variable or feeble, "what you like" is the true centre indeed from which to strike the circle of Christian liberty, but the radius varies in length from age to age, country to country, person to person, and may widen or narrow the sphere of Christian liberty.

B. *Three limitations formulated by Paul.*—1. Not expedient; (*a*) because tending to mastery; (*b*) because unedifying. 2. Distinctly sinful. (See Separate Homily.) "Expediency," on Paul's lips, is a solemnly weighed rule of life, *limiting* his liberty in even things indifferent; the world's "expediency" *extends* liberty, even to things doubtful or wrong, depending as it does upon no higher considerations than of prudence and interest, or even profit. A Christian *is* lord of this world and its life. His lordship is part of another Lordship, that of

Christ (Heb. ii. 5-10; Mark ii. 28). "All things are His" (iii. 21). But all do not, or do not equally, help his true, eternal life; many things tend to establish a sway over his will, fatal to his freedom to serve his Lord; these it is "*expedient*" for him to let alone. "Some actions (*e.g.* the use of stimulants) tend to create in some persons an irresistible habit. Now whatever deprives us of self-control does us harm, and must therefore be avoided, even though in itself lawful" (Beet). Master of all things, he must first, and at all costs, be master of himself. Otherwise in the individual is repeated that bondage of the designed Master and Lord to that Nature and that World which were designed to serve him; a bondage from which *The* Man, Jesus, has recovered Man; that He may then recover the individual man, and reinstate him with Himself in Man's rightful dominion. (The far-reaching teaching of Hebrews, *ubi supra.*) The Christian must be a co-worker with his Liberator, Christ, in seeing that no new, needless bondage is imposed by his own inadvertence, or by his ill-judged use of an abstract liberty.

II. A. *Fornication not a thing indifferent.*—[Best classical, heathen ethics put it perfectly on a level with the desire for, and indulgence in, food and drink. Physical purity was a thing hardly known outside the Jewish and Christian pale. They hardly regarded the body as part of the true man. Its acts and appetites seemed, in a sense, external to the man himself, and therefore indifferent.] 1. In the animals the three bodily appetites do stand upon same level; in them each is quite neutral, non-moral; needful to sustain, or to hand on, animal life. In man they do not occupy same level. [Jeremy Taylor points out thus one plain distinction: "If a man be hungry he must eat, and if he be thirsty he must drink in some convenient time, or else he dies; but if the body be rebellious, so the mind be chaste, let it do its worst, if you resolve perfectly not to satisfy it, you can receive no great evil by it."] 2. We cannot state an equality of ratios thus: As "Belly" to "Meats" so is "Body" to "Fornication." [Probably, so baldly stated as that, not even a Corinthian Christian would have defended the principle which seemed to underlie the arguments (? and the practice) of the Antinomian party.] Not even in the case of the "Belly" was the physical pleasure the design of its creation and co-adaptation to "Meats." Certainly, in the parallel case, the body was not created for the pleasure. 3. Belly and Food have a mutual adaptation for the sake of the body's support; yet they have only in view the support of a life which must end at the same time as they are "*destroyed*" together. So far as the body, in its formation and endowment with the third appetite, has reference to man's life, it is to that whole complete life which has a capacity for God and Eternity. Food and the food organs co-operate to keep the mere physical and dying part of the man in temporary repair. Man and woman are co-workers with God in reproducing or handing on manhood in its entirety, with a future, eternal, destiny for the body as well as for the soul and spirit. "*Belly*" has no higher end than "*meats.*" The body is "*for the Lord.*" "*Belly*" and "*Meats*" perish together when their work is done; "*God will raise* (not *body*, but) *us.*" That is the end and future of the body. The cases are quite distinct. Again, 4. Fornication is paralleled by no other physical sin in its relation to the body. Beyond any other, it finds within the body itself what it makes the means of pleasure. The man makes his very self the instrument of his sin.

B. Further reasons arise out of the fact that this sin runs most utterly counter to III. (See also under V. 1).

III. **A great honour, and that for even the body of man.**—A. *A most intimate oneness with Christ.* "*One spirit.*"—1. Compare with this the closest *friendship* based upon similarity of tastes, pursuits, interests, long association from childhood; however closely these may approximate two hearts and lives,

yet there are diversities, which may widen into divergencies and divisions. Change on either side—if even only as the result of individual growth, which cannot be enforced to a pattern, and made to proceed in duplicate—may make a very choice, close, intimate association "drop through." Much more may a wrongly spoken or wrongly understood word, break it up. 2. Compare the bond set up by blood-relationship, as between sisters, or sisters and brothers in same family, with many sympathies in common, and all the bond of "clannishness" to hold them together, and even to make external attack draw the bond only tighter. Yet a brother may become a stranger; there are friends that "stick closer" than brethren. [Prov. xviii. 24 is a general observation on human life; though fairly to be applied, as the highest exemplification, to Christ.] The bond between Christian and Christian is often stronger than between a man and his (non-Christian) kith-and-kin; the common understanding of each other's aims and feelings and experiences is deeper and truer than that which natural kinship gives; Christian affinity is often more than brotherly, sisterly affinity. 3. Nearest to it approaches—and that for a very real and profound reason—the union between a Christian husband and wife, where to all the natural basis of an ideal marriage there is added the common sharing in the life of grace. (See chap. vii., *passim.*) 4. Yet in these there is association, approximation, assimilation, union, communion—no more. *In this other there is unity.* In those there is individual life, with its self-contained independence, its possibilities of divergence, its peril of developing antagonism. "The soul of Jonathan *was knit to* soul of David" (1 Sam. xviii. 1) comes very near. Yet each heart even then has its *penetralia*, its *Holy of Holies*, of privacy, into which no most trusted and beloved foot must intrude, or can be admitted. 5. Here is unity, almost identification. "I live no longer; Christ liveth in me." As if in the believer the man came into contact and relation with an "extension" of his Lord. Not only two parallel lives, however perfectly conformed to each other, echoing, reflecting, each other—as in the ordinary human unions; but *one life.* Because of *one life principle.* [One βίος because of one ζωή.] [Dare we illustrate by seal and impression (Heb. i. 3), resting on a deeper oneness—the unity of the Godhead? Distinction, with likeness and oneness. Note, "*As* the Father hath loved me, *so* (=thus, in that way) have I loved you" (John xv. 9).] As if, in a body, intelligence and affection were distributed as life is, so that, *e.g.*, the hand or foot could know each other, or either could know and understand the head, as the head knows and understands them. Not only a similar, or the same, kind of life, but one and the same life, distributes itself throughout both and all. [Not be overpressed: these are all serviceable analogies, no more; to be criticised and checked each one by the others. No Mystic extreme of a literal merging of the believer and his life into Christ and His life till the man is lost. The individuality, the personality, the Ego, remains unimpaired. "I am I, and He is He; even when I become *one spirit with Him.*"] 6. To be remembered that the unity rests upon, and is effected and maintained by, the Work and *Indwelling of the Holy Ghost* (ver. 19, and Separate Homily). See how interchangeably—though not without a reason for, and a propriety in, each chosen expression—are employed the phrases, "The Spirit of God dwells in you," and "Christ be in you" (Rom. viii. 9, 10); the Spirit dwelling in a man, and yet so the Spirit *of Christ*, that He becomes the "common element" of life between the believer and his Lord. 7. And thus, further, the Unity was set up in the moment of our faith in ("*into*") Christ, and is maintained so long, and only so long, as nothing impairs or hinders, or negatives and interrupts, a continuous believing. 8. What suggestions in all these, avowedly imperfect, and soon misleading, analogies! They help us to climb to a height from which we see rather than reach possibilities that stretch away in length, breadth, depth, height,—a Canaan

of blessing spread out before our eyes in fair extent, and One by us—no tempter—saying, "All may be thine, soul!" They guide, not actually leading very far, but sufficiently far to show us the direction in which our thought and heart may prayerfully, hopefully, believingly, venture to go forward and explore. "Partakers of the Divine nature" (2 Pet. i. 4) opens a wonderful vista before the eyes. 9. What a profound understanding of Christ is suggested. "*We have the mind of Christ*" (ii. 16; where mind is not "characteristics," or "the mind which was in Christ," but a knowledge of His "mind"). *Love* is a good master-key, unlocking one mind to the entrance of another into its movements and workings. "He who loves me understands me." (Conversely: "He will never understand or know me; he does not like me.") But to be partaker of His *life*! Sharing, as well as understanding, His sympathies [*e.g.* how Paul "longs after" his people "in the bowels of Christ" (Phil. i. 8)]; making plans, and yet these not a man's own, but Christ's in him [Paul lays his plans "in Christ," cf. 2 Cor. i. 17]. [Paul "speaks in Christ" repeatedly, as if his were no independent voice.] 10. What a conformity of thought and will and practice to those of Christ Himself is suggested. ["Grow up into Him in all things" (Eph. iv. 15, etc.).] Beginning with inward likeness, the outward expression of my life and His will more and more coincide. The two wills both there [as against Mysticism], but the free-will of man using its freedom to choose to choose what He chooses, and working in coincident movement with His will.

B. *In all this the body has its part.*—The inner union carries the body with it. 1. It has now an object and a destiny; it is not a mere separable accident of the man. It belongs to Christ; *it* lives "for the Lord." The Lord does not disdain it; He once made it the vehicle of His self-manifestation. He died "*for the body*" which He once deigned to wear, in that He died for the whole man; and when the man is raised, His body will not be forgotten. As when God "*raised up by His own power*" the whole humanity of the Incarnate Redeemer, so will He raise up the whole of our redeemed humanity too. In human thought the body had been the slave, the outcast, the Pariah-part, of man's complex nature. Now it was elevated and set by the side of its companions, soul and spirit, with an outlook and a hope. 2. If, in any sense, believers are so "*one spirit*" with Christ that they can be said to be "extensions of Him," "part of His enlarged Self," then the body's "*members are His*"; He appropriates them for His own. 3. This more definitely, because, not only is the Church, in its totality and aggregate, a Temple within whose precincts dwells the Spirit of God, but also *the very body of the individual believer* has its own special, peculiar indwelling, and *is* a veritable *shrine* of *the Spirit* upon earth. (See Separate Homily.)

IV. **A great ransom price.**—A. A true and beautiful distinction may be drawn between redemption by *price* and by *power*: here by price. Not the redemption of (say) Lot and his fellow-captives by victorious Abraham, but the ransom of a slave by the payment of the price fixed by his owner. *Measure the greatness* by:—

1. "*Blood.*"—The last, greatest, most sacred thing a man can give for his fellow-man (John xv. 13; 1 John iii. 16). "The fountain of life; the first to live, and the last to die, and the primary seat of the animal soul; it lives and is nourished of itself, and by no other part of the human body" (Harvey, in *Speaker's Commentary*). Shedding the blood is the most solemn method of self-surrender of life.

2. "*Blood of Christ.*"—"**Of Christ!**" Do men hear that? "Of **Christ!**" "Silver and gold?" Not to be put into comparison. The very blood of the old sacrifices only serves by comparison to bring out this as more gloriously excellent (Heb. ix. 12, 13). When it became a question of redeeming man, it must be by the blood-shedding of none other, none less, than Christ!

3. *The great deliverance it has wrought.*—Said the Roman, "*With a great sum*

obtained I this freedom." So such a liberty as ours, liberty, that we might have conferred on us the citizenship (Phil. iii. 20 true reading)—could be purchased at no cheaper rate. Perfect, "eternal redemption" (Heb. ix. 12). Liberty, and power, to be holy.

4. *God's noblest creature* has been *redeemed by it.*—"What will a man give in exchange for his—a man's—soul?" God gave *this* price in exchange for each soul.

B. 1. It has redeemed *from* curse, bondage, death, *into* blessing and privilege, viz. liberty, peace, life. Fundamentally it is the price of release *from Sin* as a condemnation and as a power. Satan and death are real, but subordinate, accidental, representatives of the power of evil; evil might have had its dominion in a world where were no Satan and no death. 2. Complementary truth to the release, whether from penalty or power, is the buying for the Redeemer's purposes and use and glory. 3. Also, by payment of price, debt cancelled, bond cancelled, liability and fear gone. [Illustrate to children by Gregory and slave-boys in the market at Rome. Buying them from the slave-dealer, by putting down so much money. Yet buying for his own purpose. They are not free, but are *his* slaves now; to be set free by him, indeed, so that they might study, and serve, under Gregory, from love and gratitude, and that they might in turn go to Angle-land to preach to their fellow-countrymen the Gospel and its greater ransom and deliverance.] All this brings:

V. **A great obligation.** [Notice the true reading, ver. 20.] *The Religion of the Body.*—1. Non-Christian view of body branches into (1) asceticism, or (2) licentiousness. Suicide was Stoicism confessing itself defeated, confessing that it could not change man, or the world; nothing for it but to get out of it "nobly." So Asceticism is Christianity confessing itself defeated, and thinking only of self-preservation. ["Are suicides intense egotists?" (Paxton Hood). Disavowing, or in their self-absorption forgetting, that others have claims upon their life and service. Are asceticism, monasticism, simply egotism thinking chiefly of saving itself?] At least this has been the practical issue of the monastic life, though this began in a nobler ideal, and with a fair justification of celibacy in the special circumstances of the time. [Was good even for civil society that there should not be a powerful, *hereditary*, sacred caste.] Asceticism proclaims that one whole province of human life, one whole side of human nature, can be done nothing with except (like slaves shut down beneath deck of a slave-ship, or like the Devil in Rev. xx. 3) to suppress it, keep it under hatches, under lock and key and chained up. [Licentiousness is an acknowledged defeat in another way. Religion, and even temporal motives, cannot control the physical; it must be left to do its will; even the nobler part of man must submit to its imperious demands.] Christianity assumes, and shows, that there is no part of man's redeemed nature which ought not to, and cannot be made to, "*glorify*" its Redeemer. It is the one, only religion which has ever taken full account of the body, and laid it under contribution to accomplish any holy end. [In heathenism, ancient and modern, only too common for devotees to "present their bodies a living sacrifice"; which indeed—remembering how sins of the body had played large part in the lives of Roman converts—gives the form to that exhortation (Rom. xii. 1).] Sensual, impure sin is really heathen, even when decked out with all the beauty that culture and poetry can lay upon it. It gives the lie to one of the profoundest ideas of God in creation. The merely physical unions of the sexes in plants and animals are the beginning of the disclosure of a thought of God, which passes on through the physical side of marriage, and through the mating of two perfectly suited partners (above all, if these be both Christians), up to the final, full exhibition of it,—the union between Christ and His Church. Sins of impurity empty this grand idea of its contents, till nothing but an appetite

and its gratification remains; a reversion to the crude, elementary beginnings of God's order in creation. Christianity with firm, yet kind, hand traces out limits of lawful exercise of appetites, denying anything beyond, "for our good alway" (Deut. vi. 24, a far-reaching truth).

2. *Glorify Him by keeping* the body *in health* for His service. Noble service is done by invalids and sick persons. But the bulk of work of Christ must be done by those who are in health. Other things being equal, the best body makes the best worker. (1) *Cleanliness* is therefore *part of* godliness. It is Christian duty to give body, brain, eye, hands, etc., sufficient *sleep* to make it morning by morning at its best for Christ's service. *Holidays* find their chiefest benefit, and honour, when they send a "run-down" Christian back to office, or shop, or church, with physical powers reinvigorated by rest and change. It is more than folly not to take *sufficient, regular meals* of good food, even under pressure of the "claims" of God's work. Some spiritual phenomena, visions, trances, or the like, have sometimes found basis and explanation in a mistaken, overdone fasting. (2) Every *habit* or *indulgence* which exhausts the bodily powers, or destroys their health, is *sin* against Christ's lordship of the body. Too much pleasure, in any form which leaves body or brain unfit for prayer or thought, or even for that honest work of the daily calling which is really a most important sphere for glorifying Christ, is condemned. There are "sports that kill" the sportsmen soul *and body.* All intemperance or excess in gratifying any physical desire, eating, drinking, is condemned. There are prudential reasons against such pleasures or sins; such reasons are God's danger-signals at the entrance of "roads to ruin." But only two reasons have very much practical force against passion: to the ungodly, *hell-fire*; to the godly, the love of God and the twin truths, "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost," and this—"The body for the Lord (Christ)."

3. Even the dress of a Christian will find a regulating principle here. The body needs covering for comfort and decency. The instinct of taste is implanted, and may have its rightful gratification. No Christian man or woman is *required* to dress in an ugly, or ridiculous, or eccentric fashion. One supreme question—having taken account of station, means, proportion of expenditure upon dress, claims of Christ's poor and Christ's work—settles everything: "Do I—I—not somebody else dressing as I do—glorify God *in my body?*" [Early Christian women very noteworthy in this respect.]

4. As said above, the consecrated service of the body to the glory of Christ may be wrought out—may be asked for by Him—in its *sickness and weakness* rather than its *health and vigour.* The man may not only be employed for Christ; he may also be *laid aside* for Christ. It may glorify Christ that he should be a concrete example of the patience, peace, resignation, triumph, which grace can work in ordinary human nature. The testimony of sickness is sometimes a powerful argument and appeal. [*Faith-healing* exaggerates a true principle, of particular application, into an entirely general rule; teaching that Christ is as certainly, and to as full extent, the present Saviour of the body as of the soul; that it dishonours Him for a believer to lie under the burden of sickness as really as to lie under the burden of sin; that faith in Him would now and in all cases remove both.] [We dare hardly censure those holy spendthrifts of the powers of the body which belongs to Christ, who "kill themselves" by excessive labours, and, still oftener, by taking no proper care of their general health, or of the body when exhausted after labour; who "kill themselves" because they cannot stand and see men unsaved, or work undone. Yet, for most servants of God, more moderate labour, making the body last longer for Christ, is better consecration of the body.]

## *SEPARATE HOMILIES.*

Ver. 11. *Perpetual Miracles.*

I. **Changed men a patent evidence of the supernatural.** — 1. *Age of miracles past?* Yes, in the technical sense. Miracles [and Inspiration] *by definition* coterminous, in time and extent of distribution, with the progressive impartation of Revelation. Outside that process they are not found; Revelation complete, they cease. Revelation and Christ its Centre and Subject are a standing miracle. [The miracles were *credentials* of the agents and messengers and message; but, still more, themselves *parts* of the Revelation.] 2. In lower sense, No. God always (and not only in "miracles") was in closest touch with the visible, material, "natural" order; is still. The converted man, at Corinth or anywhere else, knows that a power has come upon him from without, and that not human, or creaturely, but Divine. Conversion meant the point when the unseen broke in effectively upon him and changed whole current of thought and will and life. The process has its "natural analogies." "I live by the faith of [this truth, and in this Person] a Son of God, who loved me," etc. (Gal. ii. 20). *I.e.* a new ruling idea has taken possession and revolutionised life. A new affection is expelling all old evil affections. And this new idea, the new affection, has come with the "demonstration of the Spirit" (1 Cor. ii. 4; cf. 1 Thess. i. 5-7). "No man can say that Jesus is Lord [nor "*my* Lord"] but by the Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 3). 3. The man is an evidence to himself, and *to others also.* Men look at, observe, wonder at, the man whom they knew, who was yesterday "*such*" as they are; who is now pure, "*washed, sanctified,*" who has evidently laid hold of a power to do, and be, right which they do not possess; and of the secret of a life, for which no interest, or force of will, or ordinary human motives, can account. "God has touched that man!" A compendious evidence, and striking, appealing to all.

II. **Vindication of universality of power and applicability of Gospel.**— No case it cannot touch, etc. (as in Homiletic Analysis). Workers need this. Temptation in mission-fields, and at home, when evangelistic work is at a discount and conversions are few, to look at the difficulties in the way of producing conviction, and of inducing open confession even where conviction is secured; to adjust expectations to one's narrower success; to acquiesce in meagre success with the cultured or rich; "our hope is with the poor" [and much Scripture can be quoted!]; to give up hope of the adults: "must not expect much from the generation of to-day, brought up in heathenism, with habits, training, etc., set; our hope is in the children; educate them Christianly." [Good work, but not to leave other undone.] Every now and again, at home and in mission-fields, God does some such wonders as these at Corinth, and rebukes little faith, and too ready acquiescence in the "hopelessness" of the adult generation. Paul's success everywhere was mainly with adult heathen, adult Jews. The Evangelical revival of eighteenth century in England began amongst adults, thieves, pugilists, unclean, worldlings, fashionables, every type. Every such case rebukes unfaithful thinkers and workers, and reassures and heartens all faithful but despondent ones. Again and again the Gospel matches itself against adult heathenism, adult sin, and *wins.* "*Such were some of you, but.*" It *can* touch and save all ages, classes, types.

III. **Happy Paul, happy anybody who can appeal to such personal verifications of the truth of the message he preaches!**—How confidently he makes his next appeal, when he can recall a dozen instances where his *formula* of the spiritual life was verified. How conclusive his appeals

and arguments, to the men whom he can claim as evidences of the truth of what he advances. "I know—you know—how true is all I say. Ye were . . . ye are," etc. Happy the man who "has his quiver full" of such spiritual children (Ps. cxxvii. 5). With such arrows he can meet "in the gate" his own doubts about his "call" or the denial of it by others. Good "letters of ordination" are such plain and unmistakable converts as these. The healed sick are the best diploma of a true physician.

Ver. 12. *Christian Expediency.*—[Combine also for study of this text chaps. viii., x., and Rom. xiv.]

I. A Christian man's rule in regard to "things indifferent." "*All* things are lawful to me" seems strong; it had been made to carry a stronger and broader meaning than Paul intended. *Verbally*, he is correctly reported; *actually*, he is misrepresented. Three specimen cases of what he had in mind found here: 1. The observance of "days" by Christian converts—the fasts and festivals of the law of Moses. 2. Circumcision. 3. Eating of flesh, especially such as had been offered to an idol. Intrinsically "indifferent" all these. No natural mark of distinction upon any "day." Flesh-meat or vegetables equally "creatures of God, nothing to be refused" (1 Tim. iv. 4). An "idol nothing in the world" (viii. 4), and never made any real difference to any healthy food. God had been pleased for a time to make some days "holy"; to have disregarded them would have been sin; but the Jewish system was now done away in Christ, and *the old schedule* of fasts and festivals with it. Circumcision had become a mere piece of surgery. "All such things are lawful to me; I may do or forbear according to circumstances and expediency." Evident that before expediency can settle a point of conduct for a Christian, it must be quite clear that essential wrong and right are not involved. The business practice, the amusement, the pleasure, must be morally indifferent, before a Christian can permit himself to conform to it. He will remember, too, how much keener his sense of sin should be, how much higher, and stricter, his standard. Not only nothing that violates the letter, but nothing that touches the spirit, of the moral law, is "*lawful*," or "*indifferent*," to him. There is, then, no question of "*expediency*."

As to really "*indifferent*" things, Paul gives four cases of "*inexpedient*" things.

II. (Chap. viii.) Paul could with a clear conscience eat any wholesome food; ceremonially "*clean*" or "*unclean*," "*offered to an idol*" or not. The kind of food he ate did not affect his standing before God (ver. 8). Many Jewish converts could not so rapidly unlearn the teaching of years, or get rid of the *habit* [reading as, *e.g.*, R.V.] of thinking of some things as "unclean," and so not allowable to eat. Many Gentile converts could not get rid of old ideas and associations, but still ate "*with conscience of the idol*" [displaced reading of, *e.g.*, A.V.; true in fact]. Idol to them not nothing, but a "*devil*" (x. 20, 21; a "*demon*" to Paul also). The unreasoning, needlessly tender, habit of their mind made them attach some importance to it. Moreover, public heathen banquets were so full of sin and sinful associations, that to join in them was likely to be ensnaring (vi. 12, "*Not be mastered by any*"), and a source of weakness. "Call it prejudice, if you will" (Rom. xiv. 14 *sqq.*), "he *is* a weak brother. *But if he cannot do these things with a clear conscience, or without danger to himself, he may not do them at all. Doubteth . . . is condemned. Not of faith . . . sin.*" Conscience, even half enlightened, must be respected and obeyed. Let a man seek for light; but until he gain more, let him follow conscience with the light it has. (Better a faithful judge, doing his best with an imperfect law, than a more perfect law with a less

faithful judge. Help conscience, train it, to be faithful, by obeying it, whilst it acts up to all light it has.) Principle touching (notably) amusements. Whole territory of our life *ought* to be wholly subject to God. In point of fact, Sin and Satan have entered, and in the pleasures of life notoriously been enthroned, and around their seat is a wide area of occupations manifestly belonging to the territory of evil. A group of pleasures still left manifestly good. Between lies a debatable ground of things indifferent, to be apportioned by "Christian expediency." The boundary of evil tends to widen. "*Expedient*" readily becomes "*inexpedient*"; seldom or never the reverse. Christian men must have relaxations. They may only have such as abide these first tests: "Can *I* take them with a clear conscience? Can *I* take them without being mastered by them?" Training may have been (like Jewish) in a "narrow" school. Or (as with Gentiles) associations of the things may be full of sins of past life, and they seem sinful to me, or are really snares. These at any rate not "*expedient*," probably not "*lawful*." A young convert just rescued from the maelstrom of wordliness must say: "*A thing doubtful to my conscience or dangerous to my soul is not a thing lawful for me.*"

III. The weaker brother may still further narrow the range of my liberty (Rom. xiv. 1 *sqq.*). I am not to harass him with stronger views, on these "*doubtful disputations*," when he first enters the Church. The clever pupils in the school of Christ must not force such a man on too fast in his learning. Be tender of his conscience; try to enlighten it, and so establish his principles; help him to strength of Christian character. But to force him to build himself up in knowledge before the foundation is settled, is to "*edify*" him to his ruin (vers. 19, 15). May not with sneer, or contempt, taunt him about "weakness," old "prejudices," or the like. Granted that his is not the highest type of Christian manhood, neither teaching nor practice of stronger ones must urge trifling with his conscience. "*Destroy not with thy meat*," etc.; "*If meat make . . . stumble, I will eat no meat*," etc. (Or, again, chap. viii. 8 *sqq.*). "To see you eat meat from the idol-altar will make him bold to swallow down his scruples and violate conscience by sitting down to eat with you? Your greater strength of principle or greater knowledge will make him harden his conscience to do what he cannot yet see clearly right, and what also exposes him to the temptations of his old life, perhaps leading him into greater sin than before? Then "*walk in love*," abstain. It is no longer indifferent, or "expedient" for you. *I.e. If associations or real danger make these things matters of danger to a "weaker" Christian, they may so become matters of conscience to the "stronger" also.* 1. Can hardly determine by general rule how far such association with "*weaker*" ones is to be regarded as extending. Older Christian and newly converted friend; Sunday-school teacher and class; father and children —is that all? Or (as, *e.g.*, total abstainer in England or America thinks) when the "*brotherhood*" is that of the same nationality or social system, or wide as manhood. 2. Nothing intrinsically wrong in the dramatic way of telling a story, or in setting horses to race against each other. But such an accretion of vice and villainy gather around the theatre and the turf, that for sake of others (if not for his own sake) a Christian gives up any participation in them. He can stop at any point on the inclined plane, can walk on very verge of danger. If weaker ones follow him, they cannot. He is then in part responsible for their ruin. "Bondage to weakness!" No; but to Christlike love for souls. We shall do anything, abstain from anything, rather than by going the full length of the tether of our own liberty, even contribute to ruin one soul for whom Christ died.

IV. (1 Cor. x. 25 *sqq.*) Feast going

on. Strong brother eating quietly whatever set before him, "asking no questions for conscience' sake," but thanking the bountiful God for His good gifts (ver. 30). To see what he will say or do, a weaker Christian, or a heathen guest, says: "That . . . offered to an idol." In a moment it acquires new character. If it is to cause difficulty to the conscience of the Christian guest (ver. 29), or the heathen makes it a test of his Christianity, then let him put that dish aside. *I.e. If a thing has become a test as between religion and the world, and will be so regarded by servants, children, neighbours, then it is no longer lawful, or at least no longer expedient.* May be unreasonably so regarded, but cannot afford to dispute. World will have rough-and-ready tests. Its instinct as to what is "worldly" is as a rule very true. Many Christians will abstain altogether for this reason (or for others) from cards or ballroom, who will still play at billiards. Or they distinguish between billiards and bagatelle, or between playing where all are Christians in a private house, and before a mixed company in public. One all-embracing rule: "Do all to the glory of God" (ver. 31).

V. **Circumcision.** (See Critical Notes, and Homily on vii. 19.)—Jewish controversialists gave a revived, accidental importance to circumcision, which made it still "*not*" even "*lawful*" to Paul (Gal. vi. 14 *sqq.*). Modern parallelism in *Ritualism*. In itself matters nothing, except to taste and cost and convenience, what architecture or music shall be associated with Christian worship. "Vestments" mere matter of interesting archæology. Might smile at the fancy for wearing or using a Roman gallows, and the instrument of sore pain to our Redeemer. But when all these things are made to mean doctrine, then, to those whom the doctrine is not true, and even seems to dishonour the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ, these things become "*not expedient*," or even "*not lawful*."—*H. J. F.*, "*Wesleyan Magazine*," 1878 (*abridged*).

Ver. 12. *Worldly Expediency.* (*To Young Men.*)—1. Days of expediency rather than of principle; in politics, in business; even in Church, the question mooted: "How much of new teaching is it expedient to give as yet to the popular ear?" Need not exaggerate danger, as if of these times only. Expediency always gains strength as God is less completely or vividly realised. [Cf. Heb. xi. 27, "Endured, as *seeing Him who is invisible.*" "So did not I, because of fear of God" (Neh. v. 15). "Set, Lord, always before me . . . not be moved" (Ps. xvi. 8).] 2. Expediency may never be a rule of Christian action in case of intrinsic, absolute right or wrong; and in cases of relative, accidental wrong or right will always operate in direction of narrowing area of "*right*," and adding to area of "wrong." Of things lawful, some, to Christians, not expedient; *never true* that, of things not lawful, some are expedient. Matthew Henry suggests (commenting on Dan. iii.) several "expediency" pleas often addressed to young men. World tempts, asks, would compel, to fall down to its fashions and ways of thinking and practice; gives "reasons":—

I. "Do not ask you to renounce your own God; only ask a recognition of that of Nebuchadnezzar also. Do not be narrow; think and let think. All truth is 'relative.' Be charitable, tolerant, broad. Perhaps idolatry is not after all merely the crude worship of the thing seen; originally, and was to nobler minds, only the use of this to assist to realise the unseen behind, or within it. Some truth in all religions, you know; even in all Christian heresies." Christianity is intolerant; truth is intolerant of error; such love for Christ as Paul's (1 Cor. xvi. 22), or John's (2 John 10), is intolerant of doctrine, or practice, or persons, that "deny" Him. The Samaritans "feared the Lord, and served their own gods" (2 Kings vii. 33). Alexander Severus proposed to put statue of

Jesus Christ in his private Pantheon, amongst the other greatest and wisest of the race. Christian heart will have no such compromise. World really intolerant. "Think yourselves right; but must not condemn us as wrong. Tolerate us; we cannot tolerate that you should not see it right to tolerate us."

II. "Only this once"; just the one prostration. Young Christian girl, or wife, "will comply this once," to win her husband by her outstanding fidelity afterwards. Young Christian man of business "in tight place"; just for this time tempted to do the doubtful (but not *obviously* wrong) thing; and *then* no more "tight places," all plain, sure, right doing and easy, afterwards. But the "once" gives up the principle. No reason for doing once which will not sanction doing habitually. Do it once, and then how the very world that tempted triumphs! "Did you not see Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-nego, bow down?"

III. "Absolute power of king would excuse them." They really only his subjects. Besides, what a benefactor he had been to them! Very hard when sense of obligation seems to plead against duty. "Surely you will strain a point for So-and-so's sake. Remember your many obligations to him. Think how you will grieve him. Think how you will condemn him by your action." Very hard this last to a sensitive, diffident, modest spirit. Hard to seem to set up oneself as right, to the implied condemnation of older, wiser, and not less admirable people. Yet nobody can answer for another in matter of conscience. "Every man . . . his own burden" (Gal. vi. 5).

IV. "At Rome do as Rome does." At Babylon, as Babylon. Ungentlemanly to be singular. Carry this far enough, and you will reach: "Amongst devils do as devils do" (Beecher).

V. "Have not your forefathers, and the very priests, complied with idolatrous times and monarchs? Are you so much wiser than your fathers?" Very forcible, to those not too confident in their own judgment.

VI. "By one act you may save your lives and be of immense service to brethren and against idolatry in future. Did not Knox and others flee to Geneva until storm was over? He who fights and runs away," etc. Let God take care of the consequences: we must do right. Let Him see to His work and His people. If we perish in the flames, He can do without us. No man is "indispensable" to God. "But we want such as you *in the world*; reasonable Christians, no fanatics. What good can you do if you make the world cut you, or drop you, from its acquaintance? Very beautiful ideal of yours, no doubt! B–u–t, you know——" No! Second Commandment forbids it. Not lawful; cannot be expedient.

[In matter of sensual sin, the only effectual barrier against the rush of the tide of passion is the command of God and its sanction hell-fire. No other motives are strong enough in the moment of the inrush of appetite. The animalism of it, the wrong done to the other party, the moral degradation and the physical consequences of excess and irregularity—none is strong enough to hold back. All are like Samson's bonds, when the spirit (in this case *evil*) enters in. (Or, better, like the chains and fetters snapped by the demoniac.) The moment the religious sanction is relaxed, the gate is open to all excess of riot. Expediency, reason, conventionalities of life, reputation—all are too easily overborne. But the waves of passion beat vainly against the breakwater of God's law and its utmost sanction. At least, if that do not resist, nothing will.]

Ver. 19. "*Temples of God.*"—The Spirit is in the Church (iii. 16, 17). He is in the individual Christian too. All Christians together, with their Lord, form the true temple of our spiritual dispensation. But each Christian is a temple too. [Both

combined in 1 Pet. ii. 5. Every stone is alive; the temple is a living temple too. That figure, however, cannot bear the weight of the truth; hardly a possible conception—a living building, built of living stones; other figures must help it, *e.g.* in a body, every member, part, particle, is instinct with the life of the whole. In a vine every branch is (botanically) a complete little vine; less accurately we say that every member in the Body has a life complete in himself, lived by himself. Every "stone" of the Temple is a temple, with its Divine Tenant. True, "Ye are the temple." True also, "Your body is the temple."

I. **Appreciate the assertion.**—1. "Whither . . . go from Thy Spirit?" If Divine, then omnipresent, and as really without as within the body; and conversely, however little we understand it, as perfectly within it as around it. But, *for the sake of the worshipper, the temple localises the god.* Aphrodite was everywhere, but a Corinthian sought her in her temple. Jehovah was everywhere, but the Shekinah-cloud over the mercy-seat, *for the sake of the worshipper* localised, emphasised, His presence within that sacred enclosure. [All words on this topic halt sadly. But the wise man uses them as unhesitatingly as the humblest reader of the Book which teaches him to employ them: with this difference—he knows how imperfectly they exhibit the truth. Figurative language is not necessarily misleading. So] if the figure here be not wholly a falsehood, we are to think of a localised, emphasised, specialised manifestation of the presence of the Spirit within a Christian man's bodily frame. We do not know how. *Nor do we know how* or where *our own* spirit dwells within it. The mystery is not greater in the one case than in the other. Both full of mystery, but both may be, for all that, *facts.* 2. May illustrate this fact by another; men were once possessed by a demon, or even by seven; in one case a legion of such had taken up their abode within the man. [The facts of demoniacal possession never to be criticised as mere isolated phenomena. They give, and they get, probability if they are found to be part of a harmonious system of spiritual facts, and to have analogies and relations to others. An undesigned, piecemeal self-consistency gives argument for a system, and credibility to its several parts.] *I.e.* within the one human frame dwelt two or many spirits—two or many persons—the man himself and the demon himself, side by side in mysterious joint occupancy. Jesus constantly distinguished between the spirit and the man: "Come out of the man, thou . . . spirit!" The demon sat within, enthroned within the debased form, lording it over the manhood of his victim, leaving him a man no longer, stripped as he was of self-control and freedom of will. At the very centre and "core" of the man's being, the evil spirit had entrenched himself, thence directing the life, and controlling the very acts and speech. Indeed, more than once the man was so completely overborne that, though the man's organs of speech are employed, it is the demon who uses them to converse with Christ. [*E.g.* the "Legion": "*We* are many."] The man seems lost. Will, thought, body—all are become scarcely more than the instruments of the evil spirit within. *The possessed man's body is a temple in which* the demon is the god. Putting "good" for "evil," all this closely parallels the "possession" of believers' bodies by the indwelling Spirit of God. The ordinary temptations of the Evil One come from "without" (so to speak). The Good Spirit also works upon the unsaved man "from without" (in the same sense). On the believer—as in the analogous "evil" case—He works "from within." 3. Compare the asserted fact with another. Jesus "spake of the temple of *His* body." But our Brother is not our brother in this. His frame "*had no*" special "*form or comeliness*" beyond that of many of those amongst whom He moved; yet God dwelt within it.

But God dwells not in Christians as in Christ. Indwelling in them; Incarnation in Him. Within His body were two natures—the human, the Divine; within the possessed man also were two—the human, the demoniacal; within us—if the words here do not entirely mislead—are the human, and the Divine also. But within us, and within the possessed, are two persons. In the Saviour only the one—the God Man. He *was* the Son. The believer is a man, but "possessed by" the Spirit. [Imperfect, and of necessity inexact, language; readily obvious to criticism, but useful as marking distinctions, which have their basis in differences of fact.] 4. A blessed "possession." Within the man is an "inward man"; yet more intimately within is the Spirit of God. At the root and source of thought and judgment, making them "spiritual." At the fount and origin of will, at the very seat of government of manhood, sits enthroned the directing Spirit. At the source of affection He has His seat, making every throb and vibration to have its centre and origin with Himself. Holy impulses and desires; holy love for God and for men; strength for good, power over evil; judgment illuminated and brought into agreement with the mind of God; conscience sensitive and voiceful, speaking the mind and verdict of God; will brought into ever more complete and glad submission to, and harmony with, the will of God,—all because the Spirit of God has taken possession of the temple of the body in the name of the Three-One. 5. "Will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth?" cried Solomon, offering his superb Temple to be God's palace in His capital, Jerusalem (2 Cor. vii. 18). Here is an answer Solomon could not anticipate. "*With* man?" "*In* man!" "*Your body is the temple* of the Holy Ghost." Paul on Mars' Hill, the Acropolis of Athens with its temples in near sight, cried, "God dwelleth not in temples made with hands." True, but in temples made by His own hands, the wonderful human body He has builded and compacted together, He consents, delights, to dwell.

II. **Three results from this.**—1. *This indwelling is the test of our being Christians.*—"Examine yourselves" (2 Cor. xiii. 5). "Christ is in you except . . . reprobates." ["Reprobate" is not, rejected *without* testing, but rejected *after* testing. "*Approbate*" metal will stand test, and gets hall-marked; "*reprobate*" metal will not. The hall-mark of approbate souls is "Christ in you."] In the unity of the Undivided Trinity this practically is "Holy Ghost dwells in me." Not an exceptionally strict test; Paul's ordinary one. [Perfectly general, Rom. viii. 9.] "If a man love Me . . . abode with Him" (John xiv. 23). This indwelling in the temple is the life in the Vine. "Christ liveth in me." "*Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?*" By that test he learned the exact position of the little group of anomalous Ephesian disciples (Acts xix. 1-7). *Will a man know?* When "the Spirit of a Son"—"of His Son"—first enters and tells him that he is now a son, who has believed in Christ (Gal. iv. 6), will the entrance of God bring no self-evidence? Did the man know of the entering of the demon into his temple? God took possession of Solomon's Temple in a cloud of blinding glory, before which even the priests had to retire. If God accept the temple of a man's heart and being and body, it may not always be with the same overwhelming glory—though it often has been—but it will hardly be unknown and unknowable. 2. *The honour of the body* (as above). 3. *Sin grows in gravity.* Enter a temple. Divinity there high-throned; altar not without offerings; but spiders weave festoons of web from pillar to pillar; walls are hanging with thick mildew and mould; every corner holds accumulated dust and filth; rubbish heaps gather outside against the walls. A loaded altar does not atone for such dishonour to the god. So in the human temple, what dis-

honour is done by the woven web of worldliness, by thick fungoid growths of sloth everywhere, by envy, pride, uncleanness of imagination, accumulating undisturbed in many a dark corner! Happy if outside, in open day, there do not gather even Corinthian sins! "*Him that defileth temple of God*" —the personal as the collective—"*shall God defile.*" Dishonour the glorious Tenant; the tenement may be left to ruin and dishonour. How many things this principle makes unlawful to a Christian! Like the altars and saints in Romanist side-chapels, diverting from the Christ upon the high-altar, so do many things divide and divert from the supreme honour due to the Spirit of God.

Vers. 19, 20. *The Christian's Obligation to a Holy Life.—Three facts in context* deserve attention: 1. *Sinners of every class* are *excluded* from heaven; 2. *Sinners of every class* have been *changed*; 3. Those changed are *under immense obligations to a holy life. Text contains three facts:—*

I. **Christian's body the temple of God.**—Three ideas suggested: 1. *Special connection with God.* As with Temple of old, as with a good man ("Thus saith high and lofty One," etc., Isa. lvii. 15). 2. *Special consecration to God.* Body dedicated to God, with all its powers and functions. 3. *Special manifestation of God.* In good man's body God specially displayed; more of God seen in good man's life than elsewhere throughout the world.

II. **Christian's being the property of God.**—"*Not your own.*" Does **not** mean—1. Your *personality not* your own. You will never be absorbed in God. 2. Your *character not* your own. Character the creation of moral being, an untransferable thing. It **does** mean our existence absolutely at His command. He has a sovereign right to do with us whatever is pleasing in His sight. Christ has laid on us the strongest conceivable obligation to a holy life (Rev. xiv. 5).

III. **Christian's duty to glorify God.**—1. What is that? To make Him more glorious than He is, impossible. To fulfil the end of our being. A holy mind is glorified in realisation of its ideals. [Sir C. Wren is glorified in the realisation of his idea.] God glorified in man when man realises in his life God's ideal of a man. 2. Will include two things—(*a*) That the human body be under absolute government of soul. The crime and curse of humanity, that matter governs mind, body rules soul. (*b*) That the human soul be under the government of supreme love to God. Love (1) always *seeks to please* the object; (2) always *reflects* the object; (3) always *lives in* the object.—"*Homilist*," *New Series*, iii. 370 (*condensed*). (See Appended Note also, following below.)

## HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 9-11.

I. **Delusion.**—Its danger. Its folly. Its source—ignorance, from a blinded heart: "the deceitfulness of sin." All in danger. The worst hope for *impunity.*

II. **Inclusion.**—Even for such sinners. All may hope for *mercy.* Its method: "ye were washed," etc. Into a kingdom, and that *of God.*

III. **Exclusion.**—The real excommunication. What? Who? Why? How?

Vers. 9-11. "*Soul, remember.*"

I. What thou wert, with a gracious sadness.

II. What thou art, with a sober gladness.

III. How the change was wrought, with a hallowed thankfulness.

Ver. 11. *The Great Contrast.*—1. With skill of an artist, Paul represents two portraits of same persons: Corinthians,—wretched, polluted, in rags, enslaved by sin;—then, morally

changed, cleansed, robed in righteousness, enjoying high Christian privileges. 2. Not to discourage, to wound feelings; to impress two thoughts—(*a*) impossibility for impure man to partake the blessings of . . . kingdom; (*b*) obligation laid on them to renounce sin, live holy life. 3. Therefore, "examine both portraits; mark contrast."

I. **Past state of redeemed.**—Applicable to all redeemed, everywhere; all sinners, by nature governed and influenced by same principles. Heart impure. Four things true of their past unregenerate state: 1. *Void of moral rectitude.* Conscience burdened with guilt. Heart's throne occupied by intruder; they enslaved by sin. 2. *Subject to impure influences.* Affections defiled. If conscience loses authority, nothing to prevent most debasing slavery. Love of self, of pleasure, of the world—three mighty powers control soul. Every thought, emotion, feeling, under power of one of these. In us—in appearance better than Corinthians—these more successfully checked in outward development. 3. *Slaves of wrong habits.* Deeds evil. Conscience and affections wrong, deeds must be inconsistent with truth and righteousness. 4. *Incapable of spiritual enjoyment.* No capacity, no taste, no fitness, for the exalted pleasures of religion, the pure joys of the heavenly world. "New creatures" alone adapted to "new heaven." A foul, *old* portrait.

II. **The present state of the redeemed.** — 1. *The change.* (1) An initiatory act. "Washed;" allusion to baptism, striking emblem of moral cleansing. But evidently also reference to another washing, which alone can take away sin,—work of Holy Spirit on heart. "The *commencement* of wonderful change in believer's soul: opening of understanding, impressing of heart, moving of affections, enkindling of new thoughts and desires. Separation from world, conversion to God." (2) *Progressive development.* "Sanctified." No faultless perfection. A process of spiritual cleansing. An ascent by slow, gradual, continued progress. (3) *Beautiful completion.* "Justified." Mentioned last, considered first. Three great causes at work in Justification. Illustrate by drowning man saved by rope; the friend who throws the rope, the grasp of the hand, parallel to the Spirit's exhibition of Christ, Saviour's work, penitent's own faith. 2. *The means.* "The name," etc. No other could have moved depraved hearts of Corinthians; no other can change a heart 3. *The agency.* "The Spirit," etc. Giving effect to the word preached; appealing to conscience, subduing enmity, gaining heart.

**Application.** — Need of calm and solemn reflection. Will produce humility, gratitude, deep, lively sense of mercy of God. Also, evidently no sinner need despair.—*Condensed from J. H. Hughes, "Homilist," New Series, i. 125.*

## *APPENDED NOTES.*

Ver. 2.—". . . In the great Day the saints will intelligently and cordially approve and endorse the sentence pronounced by Christ on the millions of earth. Possibly this approval may be a divinely appointed and essential condition, without which sentence would not be pronounced. For it may enter into God's plan that sentence be pronounced not only by Man upon men, but by men, themselves redeemed from their own sins, upon those who have chosen death rather than life. . . . It may be that final sentence cannot, according to the principles of the Divine Government of the Universe, be pronounced upon the lost without the concurrence of the saved, *i.e.* without a revelation of the justice of the sentence so clear as to secure the full approbation of the saved. If so, the concurrence of the saved is an essential element in the final judgment; and they may truly be said to judge both men and angels. That the sentence which the saints will pronounce is put into their lips by Christ does not make their part in the judgment less real; for even the Son says (John v. 30), 'I cannot of Myself do anything; as I hear I judge.'" Also, further, on ver. 3: "Thus man and men will pronounce sentence on those

mighty powers which have seduced men, but from whose grasp the saints have been saved. . . . All this reveals a mysterious and wonderful connection (cf. Col. i. 20) between the moral destiny of our race and that of other races."—*Beet, in loc.*

Vers. 17, 19. "*Temple*" *religion.*—Paul never forgets the ancient Temple. His words [viz. Rom. i. 1] give us a glimpse, and a most beautiful one, into the secret sanctuary of the Apostle's devotion. He does not, indeed, say, "in the temple of my spirit," but we may say it for him, and then appropriate it to ourselves. The regenerate soul is regenerate because inhabited by God, the Triune God, through the Holy Ghost. Where He dwells must be a temple; and all the glorious things spoken of the ancient dwelling-place of Jehovah may be transferred to the spirit of the regenerate believer in Christ. The Lord has entered, and with the peaceful majesty of His grace has said to the former usurper, "Go out of him, and enter no more into him!" Concerning all that pertained to the former unholy service—for the heart was still a temple, even in its defilement—he cries, "Take these things hence!" But it is the spirit of the new worshipper himself that hears the command, who is both temple and priest; rather the Christian man, spirit and body, for our whole nature is the temple of the Holy Ghost. There is no more impressive view of personal religion than that contained in the injunction, "Sanctify the Lord—the Lord Christ—in your hearts!" It means that the great concern of our life must be to preserve our spirit inviolate for the Sacred Indweller, to suffer no abomination of desolation to enter the holy place; to take the Saviour's whip of small cords from His hand, as it were, and use it effectually in cleansing for Him His temple. Nor is there any more terrible threatening than that which says, "If any man shall defile the temple of God"—that is, by any impurity of thought or act pollute the body, which is the framework of the Divine sanctuary, or by any filthiness of spirit desecrate it—"him shall God destroy." The Apostle lived in the flesh of his bodily life as in a temple; "an earthly house," indeed, which should be dissolved, but then be built again. He lived in his spirit, however, as in a temple which should never be dissolved, and from which his God should never for a moment depart. And he lived in hope of a better day and a more glorious service, when spirit and body should be reunited and glorified as the eternal dwelling-place of God in Christ. . . . Your body is part of that temple; let every act and office of your physical nature be offered in your priestly ministration. . . . You shall become a man in God as well as a man of God; a man in Christ as well as a servant of Christ. Joined to Him you will be one Spirit with Him, and your advance to perfection will be rapid and sure.—*Dr. Pope*, "*Sermons*," pp. 181, 183.

Ver. 19. *The Sacredness of the Body.*—About forty-five years ago, a funeral was passing through the streets of Carlisle, Penn. It was the burial procession of John Hall Mason, the son of the eminent Dr. Mason, President of Dickinson College, one of the most powerful and eloquent preachers in America. The son was distinguished for his piety and talents, and his death had cast a gloom over many hearts. Many gathered to the funeral, from far and near, and especially young men. After the services at the house had been performed, and the pall-bearers had taken up the bier, a great concourse obstructed the entrance, and great confusion and noise ensued. The bereaved Doctor, observing the difficulty, and following closely the pall-bearers, exclaimed in solemn, sepulchral tones: "Tread lightly, young men! tread lightly! You bear the temple of the Holy Ghost." These sentiments, as though indited by the Holy Spirit, acted like an electric shock: the crowd fell back and made the passageway clear. Through the influence of these words a most powerful revival of religion sprang up and swept through the college, and extended over the town.

# CHAPTER VII.

## *CRITICAL NOTES.*

A. 1. Observe: With this chapter commences a **new section** of the Epistle; the topics, and perhaps their order, suggested by a letter of formal inquiry brought from Corinth: vii. Marriage; viii. Things offered to Idols; ix. Support of Ministry; x. Lord's Supper and Love-feast; xi. Women in Public Services, Lord's Supper; [x., xi. Public Worship, sundry topics connected with;] xii. Spiritual Gifts; (xiii. parenthetic, "Charity";) xiv. Spiritual Gifts resumed; xv. The Resurrection.

2. Observe also: Stanley thinks the questions were proposed by the loyal party, and, on the whole, most likely by the Gentile element in the Church. "The tendency to celibacy was at this period . . . strong" "in the Gentile world generally." [But celibacy by no means meant personal purity.] Others rather see the motive in the Gentile, quasi-philosophic idea that matter was evil, and a celibate's life nobler, as being "spiritual," in comparison with marriage.

3. Observe further: In all these chapters are good instances of one mode and method of divinely inspired teaching. Particular cases (even of quite temporary importance, and now mainly interesting to us historically, as, *e.g.*, much in chap. xi.) are examined with constant reference to, and are decided upon, great and abiding principles of Divine order for the Church of Christ. [Just as elsewhere the biographies and character portraits, the histories, and their course and consequences, are an integral part of the Revelation. In them God is declaring His will in concrete instances, rather than in general, didactic language.]

B. Ver. 1. **Good.**—Not exactly "*morally* good," as if the opposite were *sinful*. Plainly so, from drift of chapter, and particularly vers. 35, 40. *Relatively* good; "*an excellent thing*," in many circumstances, and for many reasons, "*but*," etc. **Touch.**—Euphemistic, for a more significant word.

Ver. 2. (The) **fornications** (R.V., accurately).—*Q.d.* which notoriously abound in your heathen, social surroundings. [Perhaps not specially at Corinth, beyond any other great centre of Gentile life. See Introduction.] **Own.**—"Christianity allows no polygamy." "*Own . . . own*" are interestingly different in Greek, having a slight trace of the different conception, even in Judaism, of the respective propriety of husband and wife in each other. On his side is something of ownership; on hers of exclusive relation. **Have.**—Like "*touch*," is euphemistic; expanded in ver. 3.

Ver. 3.—R.V. follows the ancient, correct, expressive reading: "Let not married persons fancy [as, *e.g.*, Edward the Confessor] that there is any perfection in living with each other as if they were unmarried."

Ver. 4. **Power.**—Obviously is the sense of "*authority*." N.B. the perfect equality of the sexes; a particular case of a great principle asserted for the woman by Christianity.

Ver. 5. **Fasting.**—Omit, as Acts x. 30 ("certainly"); Matt. xvii. 21 ("probably"); Mark ix. 29 ("not unlikely"). "These various readings affect materially the teaching of Scripture about fasting" (Beet). Question of textual criticism, basing itself on diplomatic evidence; as likely to have been dropped in a lax age, as to have been inserted by an ascetic one. N.B. Ascetic counsels and practice might create new occasions for the Tempter's attack. N.B. also how abstinence is valued, not for prudential or selfish reasons, but according as it affects the spiritual life and its exercises. Everything dealt with here with delicacy of thought and language, and every topic lifted up into, and judged in, the light of great spiritual verities. **Be together** [not "*come*"], again euphemistic.

Ver. 6.—See Bible-class Talk, *infra*.

Ver. 7.—Paul evidently now unmarried, or at least wifeless; was he a widower? Only facts are: The prevalent Jewish judgment that a man of twenty sinned in remaining unmarried even so long; that a member of the Sanhedrin must be married. Inferences from ix. 5 and ver. 8 are very precarious. Phil. iv. 3 is now never understood as referring to any possible wife of Paul. Not quite certain that Paul was formally a member of the Council; the one fact is, "I gave *my vote*" (Acts xxvi. 10, if the word means quite so much). **His . . . gift.**—His *charism*; the word used of the "*gifts*" of chap. xii. Great rule; in arrest of hard judgments of other people (Matt. xix. 11).

Ver. 8.—How "relative" all these judgments are is evident from, *e.g.*, 1 Tim. v. 9-16.

Ver. 10.—See Bible-class Talk, *infra*. Matt. v. 32, xix. 3-9; Mark x. 2-12 [a chapter full of suggestive side-lights upon Christ's attitude towards home, family, wife, children].

Ver. 11. **If she depart.**—Under such a supposed necessity as seems to her to overbear all other considerations [local, not legal, separation or divorce being supposed], at any rate let her not be led to go further and—— [A Greek or Roman wife *could* divorce her husband.]

Ver. 12. **The rest.**—Viz. to the unmarried, the widows, [and widowers] ("of whom I just made mention"); and now, further, to those involved in a *marriage* which has become, by the conversion of one party, a *mixed* one.

Vers. 12-17. **Sanctified, holy.** — Plainly *not* with a *real*, only with a *relational*, holiness. So "*unclean*," as in Acts x. 14. Husband and children stand in a different, and nearer, relation to Christ, if the wife and mother be a Christian. N.B. the children *are* holy: a great *dictum*, with the authority of vers. 17, 40 behind it. **Let him depart.**—The Christian is never to initiate the separation; but needs not absolutely resist it, if the step be taken from the other side. **In** (not "*to*") **peace.**—Therefore the believer needs not *enforce* union upon a reluctant unbeliever, or one determined to separate; to acquiesce in the inevitable is *peace* for both, and the way is open for resuming the old relation, if good may (ver. 16) result from it. **Shalt save.**—Perhaps hardly so much as, "If you remain with the unconverted one, is it not the sure way to save?" Nor so little as, "How do you know—how can you think—that you will, if even you persist?" Lies *between*. "Who can tell? Perhaps you may. There is at least a chance." (He is *reverting* to 12-14.) **But** (ver. 17).—"Only," R.V. Difficult to translate, very elliptical. "Indeed, I give hardly any fixed rule, *only* let this be the great guiding principle." **So ordain I.**—Word of full Apostolic authority. [xiv. 37 very definite and important upon this point.] **Distributed.**—Not as ver. 7; but only of station in life.

Ver. 19.—Join this with Gal. v. 6, vi. 15.

Ver. 20. **Calling.**—From this verse, very largely, rose our common use of the phrase for a man's occupation or pursuit in life. True we really are appointed to, guided into, this by God. Yet in the word here is only the "sacred" sense: the calling into fellowship of His people. (Was any man ever "called of" God *to be* a slave?) "Whatever you were when the call reached you and saved you, in that, as a rule, abide." Cf. vers. 17, 18, 21, 24 also.

Ver. 21. **Servant.**—"*A slave.*" **Care not.**—"Do not anxiously seek liberty." **Use it.**—Use what? (1) The condition of slavery, or (2) the opportunity of liberty? Curiously ambiguous. Both senses defended from very early times. For (1) is the general drift of Paul's advice, "Incline on the whole to make no change." And this, it is suggested, with the idea in the background, "It will not matter long; the Lord will soon be here." Also Paul sent Onesimus back to Philemon to be received "as a servant." For (2) is the asserted *unnaturalness* of the other counsel, and, as things were, its *cruel* requirement that a slave should remain at the mercy of such masters as were many of those days. It is pointed out that Paul sent Onesimus back to a *Christian* master, and at least suggested his manumission. Also that, though certainly the Christian religion has usually wrought great revolutions by the "inoculation" of great principles into the social system, rather than by change imposed *ab extra*, yet that from the beginning it has favoured, and worked for, manumission wherever possible.

Ver. 24.—Contrast "*Of men . . . with God.*"

Ver. 25. **Virgins.**—*Might* include both sexes (Rev. xiv. 4). In point of fact (except perhaps in vers. 26, 27) *young women* are in his thought. Origin here of distinction between *consilia* and *præcepta*. (See again *infra*, Bible-class Talk.)

Ver. 26.—A perplexing verse again. R.V. well presents the again curiously ambiguous original. On the whole "*present*" is preferable to "*pressing*" (*q.d.* "the pressing cares of the married state"); "*distress*" being then the uncertainties and dangers involved or risked by being Christians in such times of change and, always possible, persecution. **So to be.**—How? (1) As he is; (2) As I am; (3) Unmarried; (4) As I go on to say in detail. Probably (1).

Ver. 28. **I spare you.**—Choose between (1) "I speak as little and as tenderly as possible"; (2) "I want to save you from such risks and cares and dangers, as, just now, must come upon married people."

Ver. 29 *sqq.*—See Separate Homily.

Ver. 32. **Carefulness.**—Favours ver. 28, (2); as does ver. 35, latter half. But ver. 35 also favours (1). Both are true and good reasons for cautious pronouncements. "Without any avoidable anxieties to burden your thoughts." R.V. gives all needful indication of the effect of the different punctuations here, and of the different translations of "*There is difference.*"

Ver. 34.—The ideal of "unmarried" life. Would that they all did!

Ver. 35. **Attend upon.**—Stanley finds apt illustration of the three leading words of this clause in Luke x. 39-42.

Ver. 36. **Uncomely.**—"*Unhandsomely*" (Evans). Spoken of the parent or guardian, not of the possible husband. He is presumed to *wish to do* what the *need* of the case *requires*.

"Very good; the way is quite clear; he may consent to her marrying her betrothed." Also, probably, "unhandsomely *toward her*"; not "unhandsomely as regards public opinion about keeping virgin daughters at home." This only true of Jewish opinion.

Ver. 37.—Conybeare and Howson, and Stanley, remark that no other statement of a daughter's position was then conceived or then practicable; she was absolutely under her father's power. See, for the fearful extent of this power, Pressensé, *Early Years, Life and Practice*, p. 363. As in the case of slavery, or the position of woman, Christianity did not change the social order *ab extra*, but *ab intra*. It attacked the sinful thing, polygamy (ver. 2), directly, by definite prohibition; it left this, *not intrinsically sinful*, relation between father and daughter to be changed by the working of the principle of the equal dignity of redeemed human nature in all races, ages, conditions, and in both sexes. He speaks here of a father who is *not swayed* by any external *opinion*, and who has *no necessity arising from any circumstances of his daughter* or her betrothed; in the then "present distress" he might do the excellent thing in marrying her, but the more excellent in keeping her at home.

Ver. 39. **In the Lord.**—Christian must only wed Christian.

Ver. 40. **I.**—Emphatic. Perhaps, *q.d.*, "As well as your Cephas and the rest."

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Whole Chapter.*

[An indirect treatment is suggested; thus:] Observe—

I. **How purely Paul deals with such matters.**
II. **How wisely.**
III. **How authoritatively.**
IV. **How spiritually.**

I. **How purely.**—1. His language is euphemistic. "*Touch*" (ver. 1); "*have*" (ver. 2); "*the debt*" (ver. 3); "*be together*" (ver. 5). [So the true reading, as, *e.g.*, R.V.] Yet only with the euphemism which provides a seemly covering of what, though in itself neutral, has been debased, and has now no native, unshamed, simplicity in which it may present itself to the mind. Nothing of the wrong euphemism which robes sin with a vesture of innocence and even poetry and beauty, till it flaunts itself before us in what should only have been a necessary covering of its repulsive evil. Paul's language rather indicates than mentions; there is no unhealthy suggestiveness of more than he dares unveil. His thought touches as lightly as may be; his mind and heart look with half-averted gaze. Model for all who must, on occasion, speak. So the Lord Himself dealt with sin and sinners. "Some (poets) will tune their harps to sensual pleasures, and by the enchantment of their genius well-nigh commend their unholy theme to the imagination of saints" (Edw. Irving, *Divine Oracles*, Oration I.). 2. The topic must be touched, or the Bible were not a complete directory for life. The young need pure, but plain, words. Every missionary in heathen lands finds the value of such definite, holy, wise, authoritative pronouncement upon what are questions arising every day in heathen life, or in the nascent stage of a Christianised society. Such passages as these lifted up the whole relation between man and woman to the Christian level in the early Christian centuries. Such chapters as these, privately read, still keep the conscience sensitive and the standard true. 3. May be thankful that Bible has such pages, so healthy and pure. The tendency—not to say the aim—of "natural" thinking and writing is always to minimise the sinfulness of sin. Happy for the world that one Book in the world is unaffected by the fashions or the passions of an age, and stands forth unvaryingly the "testimony" of God; an objective standard by which the perverted judgment or conscience may be regulated, an objectivised conscience, to arouse or embolden the conscience within to resume its old, instinctive testimony, when dulled, or drugged, or hardened into silence. 4. Paul and the Bible might say, with Jeremy Taylor: "I have used all the care I could, in the following periods, that I might neither be wanting to assist

those that need it, nor yet minister any occasion of fancy or vainer thoughts to those who need them not. If any man will snatch the pure taper from my hand, and hold it to the Devil, he will only burn his own fingers, but shall not rob me of the reward of my care and good intention; since I have taken heed how to express the following duties, and given him caution how to read them" (*Holy Living*, sect. iii.). Paul speaks of them as under the *physician's* necessity, and with the physician's abstinence from needless words. The Bible supplies abundant material for a holy estimate of sensual sin, even though existent only in thought.

II. **How wisely.**—1. Recognises that the question arises out of a necessity of human nature, as God has made it. All men not alike (ver. 7) by their very God-given constitution. To have nothing to say on the topic would have been for the Bible to make the same mistake as the philosophies, which disregarded the matter as altogether beneath their exalted notice. Satan (ver. 5), or surrounding conditions (ver. 2), may make the very faculty and desire, which are *per se* neutral, and have their useful part to play, the occasion of temptation. God has therefore ordained the marriage institution (ver. 9); and, given marriage, there follow reciprocal obligations perfectly legitimate in their fulfilment (vers. 3-5). 2. Yet the freedom and the self-mastery, the self-sufficient continence, of the unmarried have their excellence (vers. 1, 8, 32, 34), and especially in times of difficulty and possible persecution (ver. 26). [Paul should have full weight given to Rev. xiv. 4 on the side of his slight "preference" for the unmarried condition.] 3. He sees that the order of the world is not ideal in its simplicity, and the complex conditions of life do not permit, in some instances, of hard-and-fast rules. *E.g.* the very success of the Gospel, finding its way into heathen (or Jewish) homes, would create a difficulty and add a new element of complication to a Christian life. Husband or wife might become Christian, whilst the other remained an obstinate, perhaps persecuting, heathen (vers. 12-16). [Where both are Christians, and indeed as the fundamental principle of the marriage institution, there are to be no separations. The rule is plain. Divorce, only permissible in one case, even then simply recognises a union already broken by the wrong-doer. Nothing else must break it (vers. 10, 11).] The Christian must not move in the direction of separation; there is already a blessing to the other party, and to the children, in the fact that one member of the house is Christ's (ver. 14), and—who can tell?—there may arise a greater blessing yet (ver. 16). Still, the Christian need not, without exception and in all cases, resist separation forced on from the other side. It may be best to acquiesce in the parting; it may do more harm to seek to enforce the continued association; and God is tender of His children, and does not desire what may conduce to strife and misery, and almost make impossible peaceful service to Him (ver. 15). 4. Indeed, the general rule, applying not only to such cases as those particularly under discussion, is: "Make as little change as possible. Where, and what, the *call* of God which led you to Christ, found you, there, and that, remain; provided always that (as, *e.g.*, with the now neutral circumcision) there is no wrong or right involved." "Seek *to abide therein with God.* 'Do all things as unto God, and as in His immediate presence' (Bengel) (vers. 17-24). Circumcision is now become a mere piece of surgery; never mind it, either way. As to slavery; be not restlessly anxious for freedom (ver. 21); above all, do not, voluntarily, become any man's slave (ver. 23); it will be a harder thing there than anywhere to be the freeman of Christ (ver. 22). You are not to *choose* to give the slave's absolute subjection of your life, your will, your self, to any but to Christ; to Him you ought to give it; you are the bondservant of Jesus Christ (ver. 22; cf. Paul's frequent description of himself in these terms). And if He open the door for freedom, be free, the better to serve Him." 5. Shall the unmarried "make no change"? "There is no unvarying rule.

The Lord has given none. I must not create difficulties for any of you by laying down one myself (vers. 25, 28). Case by case, each must be dealt with by itself. Though I do judge that, for the present, as things are, and are likely to be, the fewer new obligations man or woman assumes the better (ver. 26)." [And so, in effect, vers. 32-35.] 6. Shall a father consent to, and even promote, or shall he refuse, the marriage of his daughters? Given, as before, that marriage is not *per se* sinful, but recognised and ordained by God; given also that, in the particular instance, there is no sin,—(*e.g.* given that both parties are "in the Lord" (ver. 39) —this is obligatory; to disregard this were sin),—let him give consent, if there be any apparent desirableness or necessity in it. He may promote the marriage; the course is quite clear. Still, if he do not desire it, nor the daughter herself desire and require it, he is at liberty to say that she must remain at home with him. "Make no change," Paul said; but he makes no absolute rule; only saying that, as things are, she is better free (vers. 36-38). 7. Lastly, the bond between husband and wife is lifelong, but not longer. Death gives liberty for remarriage, subject always to this—"In the Lord" (ver. 39). 8. A perfect code all this for the regulation of home and family life, of marital and parental authority. Removed, on one hand, from undue freedom, such as might become licence; on the other from unnatural, and perhaps impracticable, restriction. *Absolute veto*, in any direction where the express command of Christ or the original law of marriage plants a barrier. *Freedom*, where no considerations of moral wrong intervene; but limited by considerations of temporary fitness or of general expediency, variable, modifiable, dispensable, from age to age, from case to case. The inviolable, indissoluble, sacredness of the marriage bond is safeguarded; the mere comfort (vers. 3, 9, 15, 39) of the parties, or of one of them, is not deemed unworthy of consideration. [The possible wider application of these principles to similar cases is suggested by their employment in vers. 17, 24.] [They not only apply in heathen lands reached by Christian missions to-day, but have analogues at home. *E.g.* wife with drunkard or adulterous husband, inquiring her duty in regard to him; a wife [or son] converted in, and bound to reside with husband [or father] at, low public-house; man converted in some, not exactly sinful, but exceedingly difficult, position for maintaining a Christian walk.]

III. **How authoritatively.**—1. Any word of Christ is absolute legislation for His Church (ver. 10). 2. Paul also can, on occasion, claim that his own pronouncements are in effect Christ's, and carry Christ's authority with them (2 Cor. xiii. 3, xiv. 37). 3. If here he gives "permissions," not "injunctions," the permissions are authoritative (vers. 25, 40). The alternation, "oscillation" —not between "yes" and "no" (cf. 2 Cor. i. 18), but between "good" and "better," between counsel in a negative sense and consent in an opposite direction—do not indicate any misgiving as to his power to speak, or as to his own soundness of judgment. The absence of positiveness is itself, in these cases, sound judgment. The nature of the case forbids anything further. Even the Lord would have said, would say, no more, in cases where Paul does not; Paul will go no further than his Lord has done or would do (ver. 25). 4. The contrast between Paul and Christ is only as between supplementary and earlier-given *dicta*, between complementary and primary, but both equally authentative. [The relation of Paul to Christ in this chapter is more nearly analogous to that of the prophets to the Law of Sinai. The one leading, fundamental, Divine utterance having been once given, the prophets and the Apostle deal with the applications of it to the ramifying, multiplying, cases which are ever arising; but not with less Divine authority of utterance.]

IV. **How spiritually.**—Next to this, "Christ says so," which is the final appeal, the test is the bearing of the matter upon the religious life of the individual. 1. Even the one duty and mutual obligation which differentiates marriage from

all other unions between man and woman, may, with consent, be subordinated to a higher duty: from time to time to have special seasons for prayer, and the cultivation of the spiritual life (ver. 5). When its fulfilment is resumed, it is as a safeguard for the spiritual life against fleshly, devilish, temptation. 2. The inconvenience, and perhaps opposition and suffering, which a Christian may suffer from a heathen partner are not indeed to be borne as if of unalterable obligation. "*Peace*" may sometimes best be secured by acquiescence in the departure of the heathen one (ver. 15). Yet very much should be borne, very long and patiently, for the sake of the blessed effect upon the position, and perhaps hereafter on the heart, of the heathen one (vers. 14, 16). "What if that one may be saved?" 3. Circumcision, uncircumcision; slavery, freedom,—the Lord's apportionment was as truly in them all as it was in the "*call*" (ver. 17). Keeping the commandments is "the whole of man" (Eccles. xii. 13); the rest is accident (ver. 19). The slave has a freedom, the freeman a bondage, *to Christ*, which should not be forgotten (ver. 22). Let him bear himself as a man "*bought with a price*," and in any, every, station and condition as having God with him for his aid and defence (ver. 24). [4. The outburst of ver. 29 *sqq.* is dealt with separately.] 5. On all grounds it is worth something to be "*without carefulness*," —undue, distracting, anxiety. But it is chiefly worth, as the leisure of mind and heart are leisure for Christ and His service (vers. 32, 34). A single life finds its glory and its best justification in becoming a consecrated leisure for Him, with the opportunity, Mary-like, of oftener sitting at His feet, "*attending upon the Lord* Christ (ver. 35) *without*" Martha's "*distraction*." 6. The father who marries his daughter to a Christian man "*sinneth not*," for the highest question is not one of prudence, but of *sin*. 7. And the one primary, all-embracing, all-qualifying condition of any liberty of action for those who are Christ's is "*Only in the Lord*." The member of the Body must not go beyond the Body for its fellowships. Everything is thus judged in the light of its bearing upon the life in Christ. Next to the fundamental wrong, which bars anything, comes Christian expediency, and this must mainly be estimated by those who are "*in Christ*," and who judge by His Spirit's grace of how their life in Him will be affected.

Whole chapter may also be organised homiletically thus, as—

*A Christian Directory of Relative Duties in Household Life.*—A Christian home begins with marriage. First therefore come:

I. **Husband and wife.**—Celibacy has its advantages in its freedom from responsibility (ver. 32 *sqq.*), its opportunity for choosing one's place and one's work for God, with no obligatory reference to any will but His. [Except that the Christian daughter will pay right deference to her father's judgment and command (vers. 36-38)]. Where it does not occasion difficulty and become a point of assault for the Evil One, a man or woman may choose it, if they will. Yet married life is as honourable a condition. The foundations of a home may be laid with every hope of the blessing of God. It is a "*doctrine of devils*" to say otherwise (1 Tim. iv. 3). It is the safest condition for some natures and physical temperaments. It has its own special helps and endearments. It is traced on the lines of a higher, closer, mystical union. "*One flesh*" may be all; or the Christian man and wife may make this lead them up to "*one spirit with Christ*" (vi. 17). See them "*heirs together of the grace of life*" (1 Pet. iii. 7), joint-heirs in the same "great expectations," with a parallel share in the reversionary estate, *Life*. See them kneeling together, night and morning, "*giving themselves to prayer*." Or with special, consentaneous, self-denial, making way for some longer, more emphatic time of joint waiting upon God (ver. 5). Neither wronging the other; each belonging wholly to the other;

gladly giving all that may help the other to all purity and holiness of thought and life. And over all the union there is inscribed the Lord's own law, "No separation." They were joined for absolute, entire, exclusive, lifelong, property in each other (ver. 10). If unhappily some fatal disagreement should arise, or even the wrong-doing of the husband should seem to compel the wife to quit her husband's roof, still she belongs to him. She may not give herself to another whilst he lives. [And if his death release her, let her only look at a Christian husband again (ver. 39).] Let her heart be open to a reconciliation and to a return, if a repentant man desire it (ver. 11). Suppose God sends

II. **Children**, then these are "holy." They are not the Devil's children, not nobody's [not Jewish, nor Mahometan, nor heathen]; from their very coming into a home which belongs to Christ, they belong to Him. Born of a redeemed human stock, every child born into a home enters it a redeemed child. Paul himself baptized (at Philippi, and Corinth, certainly) "*households*," and—whether or not these happened to include very young children or infants matters little—his act recognised that the baptism and faith of the responsible head of the house carried with it the principle of the baptism of the house. Father, or even mother, becoming converted, the whole household becomes one on which Christ has a larger claim. It is "holiness to the Lord" Christ, from that moment. If the father or the mother stand alone, without sympathy or support, perhaps indeed distinctly persecuted, as a Christian, that one need not despond, nor hastily think of quitting the home. The presence of the one Christian sanctifies the children, and even the opposing partner. And if so in a divided home, how much more are the children "holy" where both parents are agreed, and are one in Christ! They may, with abundant confidence—they will, with no less assurance than if, as proselytes, they had even entered into the Jewish fold—bring them to that baptism which, at its lowest of significance, includes them all in the Christian community, that Christian "Church" whose census man can take. With no less boldness than did a Jewish father, they will claim for their "holy" children, under the sign and seal of the Grace itself, that Holy Spirit who is *the* gift and grace and privilege of the Christian form of the "covenant before confirmed of God in Christ," which runs on in unbroken continuity from the day of God's "promise to Abraham and his seed" (Gal. iii. 14-18). Nor will that Lord refuse them Who once and again made the child's spirit of docility and of simple, direct inclination to believe, the model of the spirit which alone can find its way into the kingdom of heaven, or be greatest when it is in (Matt. xviii. 3, 4). And with how many prayers, and with what thankfulness, will these Christian ones seek to train and lead these, *relatively*, "holy" children to appreciate and seek a *real* holiness, by a personal choice of, and trust in, and life for, Christ! If that mother, busy within her home, not able to do outside work for Christ, only helps a Christian husband and Christian children to be holy, she may lie down to die feeling that she has not been an inconsiderable worker for Christ and His Church.

III. **When the children are old enough to be married, what then?**—1. That Christian father is not to put frivolous, selfish, tyrannous obstacles in the way of his children's marriage. If the Lord have found for the maiden daughter a Christian man to be her mate, the father should not lightly say they must not marry. He is to remember that all the same reasons which made it better, safer, holier, helpful, needful (ver. 36), for himself and her mother to marry, may point to the right of the girl's happy, holy union too, for her sake and her suitor's. Fulfil God's order once again and lay the foundation of another Christian home: "*let them marry.*" 2. He needs be swayed by no undue regard for outside opinion. If he think indeed that there is anything in it worth his regard, and that it were an unhandsome thing to compel girl and suitor to wait

and wait, whilst her best life is slipping away, let him follow his judgment, and further their marriage [with dowry and outfit perhaps, but certainly] with his consent and blessing (ver. 22). 3. It may be that she has not any strong reason or claim upon her to leave his side; a widower father then may keep his one child to be his comfort. Two parents grown old may lovingly require her attendance and the ministrations of love and duty, so it be not with tyrannous and unfair control over her liberty, but with her free consent. "*He may keep his virgin*" daughter (ver. 23) till she close his eyes in death. If like Lydia's or the gaoler's or Philemon's, the home has its servants, or even its slaves, then as to

IV. **The servant in the house.**—1. The foundation of all is that the Lord put him or found him in a slave's condition. That is his post; there he must stay until the Commander relieves him. 2. The Gospel and its Lord, the God who is its Author, does not forget him, has indeed deigned to ennoble him, lifting him up to the honour of being a freeman in the citizenship of Christ's kingdom. [The slave might hold office in the Church.] He is a man; a man for whom Christ died. The same redeemed human nature in him as in his master, saves him from any ignoble condition, and gives him *rights* never conceded before to slaves. He need not therefore fear but that even as a slave he shall have God continually near him. 3. He goes about his work cheerful, content, with an eye in every duty to his Master Christ. Servility, slavish fear, unlawful submission—these are chased out of his life; the servility is out of his heart. 4. As belonging to Christ he is not to be indolent, untruthful, impure, a centre of intrigue and moral corruption, as slaves proverbially were in antiquity. With new rights, owed to Christ, come new responsibilities to Him, and the slave may be, should be, holy, even in an unholy household. And how transformed will the home life be in the one fact that master, mistress, children, servants, all are equally in Christ, and are only apportioned to different stations by Him, for His glory and their mutual help!

## *SEPARATE HOMILIES.*

Ver. 14. "*Sanctified by the wife; sanctified by the husband.*" — Query, wife named first here (not above in vers. 12, 13) as the case of greater hardship for the one Christian, more affecting to consider, more hopeful for the conversion of the other? Wife will sooner convert husband, than husband wife?

I. **Great principle of God's dealings.** — 1. Noah's sons saved with, and for sake of, their father. Lot blessed for Abraham's sake (Gen. xix. 29); Lot's wife and daughters brought out for their father's sake; Potiphar's house blessed for Joseph's sake (Gen. xxxix. 5); the crew of the *Castor* and *Pollux* all saved for Paul's sake (Acts xxvii. 4) — all "*given to him.*" How much blessing on an ungodly man's house or business is accounted for by the presence and prayers of the godly wife, or even the godly servant or clerk? How much blessing on "*unholy*" children because of their connection with a godly, praying parent? How many a safe journey or voyage because of the presence of one of God's "peculiar" ones amongst the company? 2. The world blessed for Christ's sake, though ignorant of Him, or rejecting Him. 3. The Christian Church — this one isolated Christian — "*holy*" because of the connection with Christ.

II. **Natural to expect that the one Christian will lead the rest into a real, saving, holy relation to Christ.** —1. *By example.* Great responsibility to be the first Christian in a family, or family circle; great grace given to meet it. Did the conversion of Andronicus and Junias (Rom. xvi. 7), Paul's "*kinsmen, in Christ before him,*" prove the first "*prick*" of the goad which he really felt? "Who is this

Nazarene—what is there in his 'religion' —that even our own family cannot be kept pure from the taint of heresy?" The one light shining amidst the darkness reveals the darkness to itself, and *convicts* it (Eph. v. 13); the first step towards its removal. "*Believe, . . . thou shalt be saved,* **and thy house**" (Acts xvi. 31); not indeed without their own repentance and faith, but yet the more probably, now that the head of the house has believed. 2. *By praying.* 3. *By direct effort.* Part of the purpose of the family institution, that by the training of Christian parents a succession of godly offspring may be secured. Large principle in Luke xxii. 31, 32. Satan desired *all* ("*you*"); Christ prayed for *one,* Peter ("*thee*"); and saved the rest *mediately,* though Peter. ("When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.") God saves one in a house, a circle, not that that one may simply concentrate thought and effort on self-preservation, self-cultivation, but that, through that one, appeal, conversion, holiness, may come to the rest.

Ver. 19. *The Indifference of Circumcision and Uncircumcision.*

I. "**Circumcision, uncircumcision—nothing.**" (Connect with Gal. v. 6, vi. 15.) 1. "These [three passages] describe the same threefold aspect of Christianity with regard to man, which, in speaking of God, is described under the names of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. In this passage . . . man is viewed chiefly in his relation to the natural order of the world. . . . In the two . . . in the . . . Galatians, the more distinct reference to faith in Christ, and to the new creation wrought by His Spirit, is brought out." (Stanley, *in loco.*) 2. (1 Cor. vii. 19.) Circumcision or Uncircumcision *nothing for a Christian to be distressed about or hindered by.* They do not prejudice his *status* before God; such external accidents *cannot hinder living for* God. (Gal. v. 6.) Circumcision [or Uncircumcision] *nothing* for him *to trust to* as a sinner *for acceptance* with God. *Faith* the one condition, if evidenced as living, saving faith by its work in love to God and to man. (Gal. vi. 15.) Circumcision or Uncircumcision *nothing for Churches* to wrangle about, to compete in propagating, to press upon their members as necessities of salvation. Can they show, do their work and teaching produce, or help and train, "*new creatures*" in Christ Jesus? That is *the* aim; all else subsidiary; worthless, or even mischievous, unless it contributes to that. Nothing! Then why insist upon it? Nothing! Then why quarrel over it? 3. Then, don't tell me what are a man's accidents of birth or station; does he there walk in all practical commandment-keeping? He may find grace to do it. The level of the supply of grace will rise and fall as the difficulty or disadvantage does. Don't tell me—don't let a man tell himself—that he has been baptized; that he belongs to a covenant, Christian stock. Is he a believer, whose faith is plainly rooted in, and is renewing, his heart? Don't tell me how a Church is winning adherents to its ceremonial, its creed, or confession; don't let it, on the other hand, boast how it is getting rid of ritual or dogma; don't let the member boast of his orthodoxy, or of his liberalism. Does this mean a membership of renewed men and women? That only is *vital.* Yet—

II. **Circumcision, uncircumcision, may come to be something.** — 1. *Controversy made it such to Paul.* (1) He circumcised Timothy, to give him greater freedom of access to Jewish work (Acts xvi. 3), and this even after (xv. 1) the circumcision controversy had begun. Had to him become merely "*concision*" (Phil iii. 2), a mere piece of surgery. Old meaning had evaporated, leaving as residuum a mere cutting of flesh. If it might facilitate work of Christ amongst Jews, it was an innocent, expedient concession to prejudice and training. (2) He refused to circumcise Titus (Gal. ii. 3), [or, at the least, if he were circumcised, made it clear

that it was not by "*compulsion*" or "*by subjection*"]. Others were making circumcision a co-ordinate, or supplementary, ground of salvation, in a conjunction with faith which really involved disloyalty to Christ, as alone and in Himself a sufficient Saviour. [So baptism at the hands of an episcopally ordained minister in an exclusive line of succession may in some circumstances not be worth a word of controversy, but in others may become a matter involving deepest issues, and requiring most thorough, strenuous discussion. So "ritual" may be merely question of the style and taste of the conduct of public worship; or may become full of significance as to the priesthood of Christ, the sufficiency of the sacrifice of Calvary, the ground and means of the regenerate life; deserving then most earnest discussion. So a creed may become a test of loyalty to Christ and to Truth.] 2. *God had made circumcision much to His people.*—The *symbol* of a complete sanctification of human life—even bodily, animal (Deut. x. 16, xxx. 6). The *seal* between Him and them of a blessing not only promised to them, but thus pledged to them. [As baptism may in parents and in children help faith to claim what God has not only promised, but covenanted to give—Christ and the Spirit.] 3. Should be remembered how the importance of such things varies with God's appointment or repeal, with the knowledge or the needs of a Church, an age, a generation, an individual. Value relative, not absolute.

Ver. 21. "*Use it rather.*"—It is surprisingly ambiguous to us. [Was it also so to Paul? Did he mean it to read ambiguously, lest the letter should fall into hands of heathen masters, and cause trouble to Christian slaves? (As some assume the number 666 in Rev. xiii. 18 to be a cipher, intelligible to Christians through orally given and transmitted explanation, but, prudently, left unintelligible to any chance heathen reader.) Would this be "the *simplicity which is in Christ*"? (2 Cor. xi. 3.)] Like "*so to be*" (in ver. 26), can be read in more than one way; like some well-known oracles of Delphi (to Crœsus and others). Said to be unnatural, cruel, to counsel a slave to refuse liberty if offered. Probably so; and this is then parallel to the permission given to a Christian wife to accept her "freedom" from a determined, troublesome, heathen husband, who himself leaves her, without provocation on her part, except that she is Christian. Spirit of paragraph (vers. 17-24) may be summed up thus:—

I. **Do not force change**; do not be *anxiously* concerned to make a change; where "*the call*" found a man, "*there let him walk.*" "*Care not.*" 1. Very natural to Christians whose providential (ver. 17) place presents difficulties in being godly, to wish themselves somewhere else. The saint-slaves in Cæsar's household (Phil. iv. 22) naturally look wistfully, in some day of special hardship, toward the position of the poorest Roman free citizen in the Church. A modern Obadiah—finding every day in some Ahab's house, with a Jezebel for a mistress, that he walks constantly as between red-hot ploughshares, every step an ordeal and a peril—wishes he were something else than Ahab's steward. 2. Feeling shapes itself, "Ah, now! if I were only in So-and-so's position"; or, "If I had only So-and-so's husband"; or, "If, instead of what I am, I could only be such-and-such a thing;—then I would serve Christ! If I only had that man's opportunities, would I not be a saint and a worker!" And a step farther is common, and easy to take: to assume that no thorough-going service, no fulness of happy Christian life, is possible in our actual providential position, and to give up effort and hope, acquiescing in being an average, a *minimum*, Christian; just holding on; not quite giving up Christ, but no more. And then a step farther: to be fretful under and rebellious

against the appointment of the Father, Who guided us to the position, or converted us in it, and has not yet seen fit to open a way out. 3. No. First, is there any sin in remaining in the present position? If there is, then duty is plain: at all costs get out of it. But if not,—as seems likely from the fact that God does not open a way out,—until He does, that is a man's place, as before God. Christ, the Lord of his life, wants him *there* for the present—there and nowhere else. To be the light there, the salt, the leaven. For the testing, the moral probation, perhaps the salvation, of some set over him, or in daily association with him. Where He puts a man, converts him, keeps him, there it is possible to live near to God (ver. 24), and to exemplify and honour the Christian profession. [Said a wise mother to her boy, smitten with some boyish longing to be something (other than his apprenticed trade) which had smitten his fancy, and who urged, "I shall never do any good at ——; if I were only put to ——, then I should do well.' "Thou has nothing to do but to be what thou is."—Known to H. J. F.] If it be only difficulty, not sin, that is involved, there is no insuperable barrier to being very holy under any conditions. Conversion *in* them, no providential way *out* of them offering itself, set up fair presumption that God says, "Stay there as My witness. I am with thee always. Abide there with Me." The slave, the circumcised man, the uncircumcised man, the Christian wife of a heathen husband, *can* glorify, and enjoy, God where they are.

II. **Accept thankfully God's providential relief.**—"*Use it.*" 1. The moment He sees that the sevenfold heat of the furnace can, and need, no longer be borne, He will, depend upon it, open the door. Then Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-nego, should "*use*" their opportunity. Their work for God *in* the furnace is done; now they are called to continue their work for Him outside. Paul had "learned"—he wrote from a Roman dungeon—"in whatever state therewith"—with dungeon and daily peril from Nero's capricious, cruel "justice"—"to be content" (Phil. iv. 11). Yet when the prison doors were opened, there would have been no "contentment" in not coming out to the wider field, larger opportunities, greater comfort, outside. 2. Whilst under the pressure of the difficulty, nothing forbids earnest, childlike, submissive prayer that a way out may, if it please God, be found or shown; especially if the difficulty verge upon sinful conditions, and an impossibility of retaining the favour of God or being holy.

III. **The relief, the release, is to be used, not for our own comfort, but for Christ.**—The free man, or the liberated, is not his own master. He belongs to Christ (ver. 22). His liberty gives the opportunity of a self-devotion to Christ, unfettered by conditions or the rule of another. If God take off the pressure from the Christian employé, or wife; if His providence "set the feet in a large place" after long "straitness"; grace will be needed to keep in the new conditions as really as in the old. The change means that He desires him to go on with his work for Christ somewhere else, which He chooses shall be more favourable. [Same principle as in the case of the freedom of the unmarried. Miss Havergal is a very ready-to-hand illustration of the consecrated leisure of an unmarried life (ver. 34).] With none of the spirit of bondage, he must use his new position—perhaps its wealth after poverty—with as strict a sense of obligation to his Master, as a slave is forced to recognise towards his. Every added privilege—liberty from persecution, from care, from a trying association, from an unhappy marriage,—all is so much the more facility for serving the Lord Christ. "*Use it rather*," but for Christ in all things.

IV. **Be careful not to create bondage or difficulty for oneself.**—The free man is not voluntarily to become the slave of man [whether literally, or in a sense perhaps obliquely glancing at

the Corinthian subjection to their party leaders] (ver. 23). In self-created, self-incurred, difficulty or trial, there is still blessing and help, indeed; God never takes the attitude: "There, I told you so. Now you must take the consequences." But there is no such claim to it as where the "*call*" finds and saves a man *in* the bondage. The young girl who does not marry "in the Lord" may lose her religion, or, at the best, has created for herself a bondage or a cross, perhaps for life. Let the Christian remember the dignity of the freedom which belongs to his *status* in Christ. He will not go into a partnership, or take up a calling or business, which will fetter him, and limit or destroy his freedom to serve Christ and be holy. Keep and "*use*" liberty "*rather*." "*Ye are bought with a price.*" Your life—yourself—too precious to play into Devil's hands, or to assume man's fetters in any sense.

Vers. 29-32. "*As not abusing it.*"—An eruptive burst of solemnly intense feeling. On a higher level than the preceding and following verses. As if all such discussion of small points of prudential regulation were uncongenial. "Brethren, I answer the questions of your letter. But why do I spend—why do ye—so much time and thought upon matters which if the Lord came, or life ended, would in an instant cease to have any importance for us. I answer you, but, above all, this I say," etc.

I. **Two great considerations.**—1. "*The time is short.*" (1) The time has lengthened out to nearly twenty centuries! Yet there should be no haste to assume Paul to have been mistaken in expecting the Parousia during his own lifetime. Remember how closely Christ had associated His coming with the fall of Jerusalem; remember how, practically, the Lord does come to every man in his death-hour. Practically we are ever in the presence of His Coming. (2) "Short" and "has been shortened" (so the Greek). Illustrate by the cell discovered when the French captured Madrid in 1808, and overhauled the Palace of the Inquisition. Its walls iron plates, removable; each night one taken out, and the opening closed up, till at last three only left; then one removed; two left, which closed fatally upon the prisoner. So Paul reminds us how the end is being made to close in upon us; nor have we the power to stay this constant narrowing in of our opportunity for making ready to meet our Lord. Every night, and another "wall" has been removed; our space by that much the narrower, our time shortened by a day. (3) That prisoner might count his days, and, if that were his temperament, might give himself up to some employment, reckoning with all human certainty upon such-and-such a margin of time, and regarding the inevitable end lightly until it was actually upon him. Our danger is that, knowing nothing whether one day or a thousand be ours, and believing (with more or less of reality of faith) that any mistake will be irreparable, we should so give up ourselves to home (ver. 29), pleasure (ver. 30), business (*ib.*), as to find the end upon us, and ourselves unprepared for the Lord. (4) Time never seems "short" until gone, and too late to repair an error. True of some temperaments more than others. The special danger of young hearts. Time stretches away in such a long, long vista that no end is seen at all. Sir Philip Sidney hits off that characteristic in a well-known description of a pastoral landscape in his "Arcadia," book i. [Describes proudly high hills with stately trees; humble valleys with silver rivers; meadows enamelled with flowers; thickets full of well-tuned birds; and concludes:] "Here a shepherd's boy piping, *as though he should never be old.*" (5) Yet not the danger of young people only and of inexperienced ages of life. The danger of every eager, active nature. Older men, with their half-century or more behind them, are found planning and working and hoping, on a scale and with an intensity which seems to count on staying here for

ever. It is the "secular" temper always. A worthy, noble side to it. The restless, untiring, hopeful, inventive energy, to the last planning something new or larger, is a witness to a nature in man made for a larger life than the earthly. Such men vindicate for man a nature which can only in an eternity find room for its development and activity. [True, there *is* eternity for a harvest, but the sowing-time *has* each day *been shortened*, with solemn inevitableness.]

2. "*The fashion . . . passeth away.*"—(1) Paul's word suggests all the incessant change of men and circumstances in our busy life, as the change of scenes and action and "business" in a great stage-play. The Christian is as much an actor in the ever-shifting scene as any other. But Paul asks men to moderate their eagerness by doing what is so hard to do: "Come off the stage for a few moments. Be a spectator, a critic, instead of an actor. *See how things change, and how fast they change! See how little they all mean when the play is over!*" (2) [Of course his word only slightly connected with fashion in dress. Yet illustrate by it.] Take up book of old fashion-plates! How you laugh! How grotesque! Yet those odd, absurd dresses were to many objects of life-absorbing, soul-destroying, interest once. "Odd that the actors should lose life over the dress in which they play their parts." You think so? Look, then—laugh, *learn!* In an old library, you come across dusty bundle of old political pamphlets and election literature. "Dry as dust!" Yet all England once rang from end to end with that strife. "Never heard of many of these names." Yet they once were on every lip; around them raged the fiercest party feeling. Yourselves remember some old political contest; to-day you wonder, laugh, at the eagerness you felt. Learn, then, to measure the real importance of the present-day Act of the Drama. Men are losing their souls over it. Yet it is the merest stage-play passion and "business," *passing away*. Or, remove from a town, long your place of residence. How soon the newspaper becomes uninteresting. How small the play they are acting there, the little personages, of whom fewer and fewer are known to you! Difficult to keep up correspondence with a friend there; you soon drift into different worlds. As to all the drama of the town's life, its busy world of buying, selling, marrying, burying, weeping, rejoicing,—you soon find yourself very much "off the stage." It seems "thin"; but to the actors on those boards there is danger lest they be so swallowed up in it as to forget the end. (3) In truth, we cannot be only spectators. Whether we will or not, we change with the changing scene. Loves, friendship, habits,—all change. We *ought* to take our part. The passages and personages in the daily drama have their importance. They are our work. The stage is our place, for the time. (4) But we are not to forget, amidst the bustle of the acting and the shifting of the scenery, or the interest of the drama, that all is passing—the play and the actors—and the coming of the Lord is drawing near. Not to let this stage-play of a life make us forget that the world of eternity is the world of reality, and that its first fact is the Coming and Assize of the Lord and Judge.

II. **A great rule for conduct.**—1. "*Not abusing it,*" or, more exactly, "not using it to the full." [Illustrate by child with hand thrust into narrow-necked jar of filberts. Hand too full to allow of its being drawn out again. Child too greedy to take smaller handful.] Others besides children make the mistake, and need the lesson. Use the world; you must, you shall; its work is duty. Home has legitimate claims. No reason in religion why a man should feel no natural sorrow or joy. God gave the heart that feels, and the dear ones who give the joy, or, in their removal, cause the anguish. Be the good business man God made you. Some things indeed are out of all question; no place possible for them in a Christian life at all. But for the rest, **take care! Do not fill your hand too full!** Not quite as full as in the

abstract perhaps you might, lest the world get grip upon your heart till you cannot get release at will. Do, enjoy, *a little less than is lawful.* Keep well within the limit; keep yourself free. *Not to the full!* [Paul saw how the comforts, pleasures, cares, responsibilities, of home might so steal away, or swallow up, the whole man, as to leave little time, and less and less energy, for the kingdom of God. Men are paralysed with sorrow or stupefied into uselessness; or nurse grief till it becomes a reason for doing less, or nothing, for the Lord, if, indeed, they are not soured and made rebellious towards Him. The very joy in the abundance of God's gifts may ensnare hearts, until the outlook, the future, the Coming, is forgotten. Danger in buying and selling, whether successfully or unsuccessfully.] [R. Cecil said, "I want to see no more sea, hills, fields, valleys, abbeys, castles; I feel vanity pervading everything but eternity and its concerns, and perceive these things to be suited to children." The weakness and the strength of the Evangelical school there. The *weakness*; repellant, *e.g.*, to such as Kingsley (compare, in Wesley's *Journal*, his vivid interest in everything). The *strength*; "**This one thing I do.**"] When first go to stay by seaside one sound always in one's ears. Amidst the merry play of the children, behind the music of the shore, in the background of conversation, or reading, or dreamy thought—*the roar of the waves.* By-and-by we get accustomed to it, and forget it. The spirit of Paul's outburst is: "Don't be unpractical. Don't be unhealthily ascetic. No need to wish, or to try, not to take part in life. But behind all do not lose out of your ears and thoughts the ocean of Eternity, and the coming of the Lord which launches you upon it."

Ver. 6. (Connect with vers. 12, 25, and 2 Cor. viii. 8-10.)

*Permission and Commandment. A Bible-class Talk.*

"Does not Paul say plainly that he writes some things without the help of the Holy Ghost, and simply on his own responsibility?" "For example?" "'I speak this by permission, not of commandment'; and, more plainly (ver. 12), 'to the rest speak *I, not the Lord*'; and further (ver. 25), 'I have no commandment of the Lord, yet I give my judgment,' etc." "As to ver. 6, the difficulty only lies in the English phrase employed. [R.V. makes this perfectly plain.] 2 Cor. viii. 8, 10 also uses [what are really in Greek] the same phrases, and where the meaning, even in English, is clearer. Paul is making a great Relief collection for poor Christians at Jerusalem. The Corinthians are not too well disposed towards him, and (ver. 20) perhaps a little suspicious about all this money-getting. He had foregone his right to maintenance amongst them, lest there should be any chance for any one to say that he made a gain of them or of the Gospel (chap. ix.). So here he will not 'command' them to finish up the collection, but gives his deliberately formed 'advice,' guided by the Spirit of God; [for when he says (ver. 40), 'I think that I also have the Spirit of God,' there is no doubt in 'I think,' but only a modestly restrained expression of perfect assurance.] Explain similarly ver. 6 and its paragraph. 'In this whole matter of marrying, I do not speak by way of commandment. I do not say "Marry," for it seems to me just now expedient, because of the present and impending evils of the Church, that a man should have as few ties and responsibilities as possible. But I do not say, "Do not marry"; as an apostle I give you full permission to marry if you wish.' Is that clear?" "Yes; but go on to ver. 10." "Well, next he forbids frivolous, capricious separation between husband and wife, such as was a common scandal in Greece and Rome. 'I command that there be none of this,' he says. And then, to make this important point more emphatic, he backs up his own Apostolic judgment with the express words of the

Lord Jesus Christ on this very matter (Mark x. 11, 12). He adds, therefore, 'But here the Lord commands as well as I.' There is no hope that disobedience will be blameless. 'But (ver. 12) to the rest—the unmarried and the widows—I only say that they are prayerfully and soberly to follow their own judgment of what is prudent or necessary. There is no express word of Christ on record as to this particular point.' Now ver. 25 will present no difficulty." "Does he mean to say that, as to the marriage of their young women, he has no express command of Christ on record, or in the Apostolic oral report of the life of Jesus to fall back upon, but that he once more gives his decision as one found worthy to be entrusted with an apostle's commission and grace?"—H. J. F., *Wesleyan Methodist Sunday-School Magazine*, 1876, p. 131 (*condensed*).

[Farrar, *in loc.*, reflects another type of estimate of Paul: "In the abstract, somewhat hesitatingly, and with the confession that he is not sure of his ground, and is therefore offering no authoritative decision, St. Paul on the whole agrees with" those who "regarded celibacy as the only perfect form of life." In a footnote he adds: "The chapter is the best manual for the *ductor dubitantium*, because it teaches him 'that he must not give himself airs of certainty on points where certainty is not to be had' (Maurice, *Unity*, p. 429)."]

[Bearing on this point are vers. 10, 12, **17**, 25, 39; 1 Cor. iv. 1, 17, x. 15, xi. 23 (xii. 3, xi. 3), **xiv. 37** ("my words are the words of Christ"), xv. 3 (2 Cor. i. 24), (x. 8, 9); also 1 Thess. **iv. 2**, v. 27; Col. iv. 16.]

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *CRITICAL NOTES.*

N.B. 1.—See the question discussed in this chapter homiletically treated under vi. 12.

N.B. 2.—Note how Paul here (as in Rom. xiv., xv.) bases nothing of his reply to the Corinthian questions upon the decree of Acts xv., though dealing so directly in this Epistle with two of its points—fornication and things offered to idols. He is dealing—as Stanley points out—not with the Cephas, the Jewish party in the Church, but with the (self-styled) party of Paul and Apollos; *i.e.* not with the scrupulous, conservative section, but with the too progressive, too much emancipated section; and these would not be likely to pay very much heed to the decree of a Church council in Jerusalem. Moreover, the Epistle is to become part of the permanent revelation of God to universal mankind. Its very method of dealing with questions and problems of practical ethics is not a small part of its revelation. This question, therefore, is here discussed and determined, not on the basis of submission to an external ordinance, however authoritative, but by reference and appeal to abidingly, universally, valid principles of right reason and right heart. Authority will always have its function and place and use; but the best legislation and its sanctions will be such as are also rooted in the intelligent, moral conviction of a spiritual mind and heart.

N.B. 3.—Good note in Stanley as to the "eating meat offered to idols." "The act of sacrifice amongst all ancient nations was an act, not merely of religious worship, but of social life. In most cases, only a part of the victim was consumed as an offering to the god" [as with the Hebrew "peace offerings," Lev. vii. 15-18, 20, xvii. 2-6. Cf. 1 Sam. xiv. 32 *sqq.*, especially 34]; "the rest fell to the portion of the priests, or was given as a banquet to the poor, or was sold again in the markets for common food, either by the priests, or by such sacrificers as could not afford or did not wish to undergo the expense of the whole victim. Hence most public entertainments, and many private meals, were more or less remotely the accompaniments of sacrifice; most animals killed for butcher's meat had fallen by the hand of the sacrificer." [Hence, he points out, the close connection, occasioning some ambiguity

in the use of the word for "kill" (*e.g.* Acts x. 13), between killing for sacrifice and killing for ordinary purposes.] "'Sacrifices' are enumerated by Aristotle and by Thucydides amongst the chief means of social enjoyment. . . . At Corinth the conquerors in the Isthmian games used to give a banquet to the people, immediately after the sacrifices, in the temple itself of Poseidon. That these banquets often took place in temples appears from the stories which relate how Claudius and Vitellius, in their ungovernable greediness, rushed in from the streets to partake of the feasts round the altar." [So in 1 Sam. ix. 23 the cook brings up a shoulder which has remained over from the sacrifice and banquet of vers. 11-14. Cf. also 1 Sam. ii. 13-17.] "Closely as the whole social life of the ancient world was interwoven with its religious worship" [see how revolutionary for that reason Christianity was socially in, *e.g.*, England: Green, *Conquest of England*, i. 8, 9], "the decision of this question affected the whole relations of the Christian society with its heathen neighbours; and, in fact, involved all the similar, though more complicated, questions discussed in the first four centuries of the Christian Church, respecting the lawfulness of attending on the spectacles, or receiving the honours, of the Roman Empire." (Stanley, *in loco.*) *E.g.* N.B. 4.—"The council of Ancyra condemned them to a two years' suspension from the *Sacrament* who sat down with their *heathen friends* upon their solemn Festivals in their *Idol Temples*, although they brought their own Provisions along with them, and touched not one bit of what had been *offered* to the Idol" (Cave, *Prim. Chr.*, Part I., chap v.).

Ver. 1.—New topic, in reply to an inquiry from Corinth, resumed in chap. x., after a digression, the resumption growing out of ix. 19-21, and out of the discussion of the, in some respects, analogous Love-feasts and Lord's Supper. **We know . . . knowledge.**—Spoken ironically; *q.d.* "'We all have knowledge.' Oh yes! I quite understand that. I said so in the first sentences of my letter (i. 5). No doubt you are really a very understanding people" (Deut. iv. 6). Then with sudden change of tone, almost bitterly: "Well, well; you with your 'knowledge'! Take care! It may be a danger, instead of a glory or a help." N.B. 5.—The R.V. margin; also same word in ver. 10 (margin).

Ver. 2. **Thinketh.**—Like "I *think* so," in Anglican Ordination Service; *i.e.* not with any doubt, but with all—as he believes, reasonable—certainty. So x. 12; Phil. iii. 4; (Gal. ii. 9). **Ought.**—In the fitness of things in the Divine life of the soul. But Beet says "must needs know," for all salvation and spiritual life come through the intelligence (John xvii. 3). N.B. 6.—"*Know . . . knowledge*" have different roots in Greek.

Ver. 3.—N.B. 7. Evans (in *Speaker*) makes last clause of ver. 3 mean, "*He* (viz. God) *is known of him*" (viz. the "know something" of ver. 2). Observe rather how (as in Gal. iv. 9) Paul shrinks from saying outright, "He knows God" (Matt. xi. 27). Observe also how Paul speaks almost as if in the dialect of John.

Ver. 4. **Nothing in the world.**—Not to be joined in the colloquial sense, "nothing in the world." But, "In the world there is no reality as of a divinity, behind, and corresponding to, the idol." Observe the slightly variant translation in. R.V. Cf. x. 19.

Ver. 5.—The (so-called) Olympian gods, and the crowd of inferior earth-dwelling divinities. No stronger sense to be attached to "*there are*" than to "*there be that are called*," as if allowing any reality to the gods; emphasis is upon "*many*," not upon "*are*"; *q.d.* "As, in fact, in current belief and speech, there are indeed *many* such so-called 'gods.'"

Ver. 6.—As usual, the "*Father*" is called "*God*," yet not so as to exclude the Son from Godhead, any more than to call the Son "Lord" excludes the Father from Lordship. N.B. 8.—The term [the unity of God] is used only by analogy. Though there is one "Divine nature, the unity of God is not a unity of kind, because there are not individuals of the same species, and therefore, as for other reasons, the word is inapplicable to the Divinity. Of all other objects of thought we can imagine fellows or reproductions. But in God there is absolute soleness—SOLEITAS; though what lies hidden in the mystery of this essential ONENESS we know but partially. It is wrong to dogmatise upon the nature of a unity to which we have no parallel, and which we cannot define by comparison or illustration" (Pope, *Compend. Theol.*, i. 258). This unity not to be so emphasised as to reduce the Unity to three manifestations of the One God, successive but in different modes—Sabellianism. Paul is still so far a Jew that, speaking in the presence of heathen idolatries and of Jewish sensitiveness, his language is coloured by the Monotheism in which he had been trained from early boyhood. Yet "*Lord*" is the New Testament appropriation of the LXX. equivalent for Jehovah, and he, above all others, makes it the customary designation of Jesus of Nazareth, his risen Master. [See, as to the practical usefulness of the Unity of God, Rom. iii. 20 (therefore one way of justification before Him, for Jew and Gentile); 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6 (therefore prayer should be offered for all men); Gal. iii. 20 (most obscure introduction of the thought; perhaps the meaning is—therefore a Promise from Him Who is one and alone in giving it, is a transaction of a different nature to a Covenant, which implies two or many parties); Acts xvii. 26, Eph. iv. 6, Mark xii. 29, 33 (one object of worship, therefore one undivided heart-allegiance).] N.B. 9.—Observe the carefully distinguished prepositions, indicating origin,

end, midway condition, respectively. The rivers of being came *from* and return *unto* God, the Sea, their Source and Good (cf. Eccles. i. 7). Their midway course is conditioned at every point by Christ; all is *through* Him. [N.B. 9.—Look at John i. 3, Heb. i. 2, 3; in Col. i. 16 notice how Christ is, like the Father here, made the goal and end; in Rom. xi. 36 the "*through*" here connected with Christ, is associated with God. This interchangeableness of God and Christ in such relations, speaks significant things as to Paul's inspired estimate of the Jesus whom Peter and many still living had known in the flesh and "after the flesh."] **We.**—Amongst the "*all things.*"

Ver. 7. Important new reading (as in R.V. text) now in great favour. Choose between (the old, which meant) "still finding a moral difficulty for conscience in the idol," and (the new, which means) "still under the influence of inveterately habitual association of ideas." Both, no doubt, true difficulties to all converts. Robertson (*Lectures*) aptly parallels a modern instance: "Science has banished an express faith in the existence [of apparitions], yet . . . much credulity on the subject remains. The statute book is purged from sentences on witchcraft, yet a lingering feeling remains that it may still exist in power." So, he continues, the heathen deities "were dethroned as gods, but they still existed, to the imagination, as beings of a lower order,—as demons who were malicious to men and enemies to God." [But does this last satisfy x. 20?]

Ver. 8. **Meat.**—Wider, of course, than merely "flesh-meat"; distinction drawn in ver. 13. Equivalent to "what is eaten." **Commend.**—For the figure see, *e.g.*, Rom. v. 8, or 2 Cor. iv. 2. Notice the reversed order of clauses, as in the new, better reading. The diffident, morbidly scrupulous, are first reassured; then the too confident, inconsiderately "broad," "liberal" people are cautioned. Notice the marginal literal rendering in the R.V. Rom. xiv. 17 is parallel.

Ver. 9. **Liberty.**—Really "*power*"; connected with "*are lawful,*" vi. 12; not supposed by Paul to be any *unauthorised* "*liberty,*" thus taken by the Corinthian who eats. Right enough, in the light of clear, abstract knowledge.

Ver. 10. **Emboldened.**—Literally "*built up,*" a new turn given to the word of ver. 1. "*Ruinosa ædificatio,*" Calvin.

Ver. 11. **Perisheth.**—Note this present, not future, tense in the best reading. As always, "salvation" and "perdition" are continuous conditions, begun already and simply continued, though intensified, into eternity (so Acts ii. 47; 2 Cor. ii. 15). Also note the theological deduction drawn from this; with a force the stronger, just because the point occurs incidentally, an understood and accepted truth, both to Paul and to the Christian, in dealing with whom he makes it a sure basis of appeal;—a man may be even now perishing for whom Christ as much and as really died as for those who are now being saved.

Ver. 12.—How Paul had learned the lesson of Acts ix. 4. (See the homiletic treatment of "The Body of Christ," xii. 27.)

Ver. 13.—Different word for "*stumble*" here from that in ver. 9. That really is "*stumbling-block*"; this is (*always*) rather a trap or snare, which catches, by entangling, the feet.

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Whole Chapter.*

Whole chapter may be grouped around the two clauses of the concluding sentence of ver. 1.

A. **The teachings of knowledge** (vers. 1-8).

B. **The teachings of love** (vers. 9-13).

A. I. **The great central truth is the existence and unity of God.**—This has been the peculiar work of Israel, to preserve and exhibit the truth about Him. Others might speculate about an Eternal Matter, a self-originated, self-sustained, Creation, eternal *a parte ante*; Israel knew only an Eternal Creator, "of Whom . . . to Whom," etc. Others might confuse Him with His work; Israel knew—and the Church knows—of a personal Creator distinct from His Creation. Others might "solve" the problem of the presence of evil, physical and moral, by a Dualism which conceived of a co-ordinate, independent author and worker of the evil, side by side with the Author and Worker of good; Israel, and the Church, testify to a personal worker and author of evil, indeed, but one who is the creature of God, working in strictest, though enforced, subjection to the limitations of the will of the one only God, and mysteriously subservient to the purposes and glory of that ONE Only GOD. "*Unto* Whom."

II. **The new stage, just then being reached by the world in the unfolding of**

**God's revelation of Himself,** discovered this God in relation to another "personal" existence within His own essence. A "Father," loving and loved by a "Son," Who had stepped forth from the unseen, within then very recent years, and in human form had taken His part and place in the history of the race, the historical "*Jesus*," the "*Christ*" for whom Israel had been for ages waiting, the "*Lord*" in the life and worship and thought of Christians, Jew and Gentile alike. And a yet more profound and mysterious truth connected with this Jesus Christ, the Lord, was coming into view. He is seen standing a Midway Term, a Mediating Condition, making possible, actual, the (intellectually difficult) passage between Creator and Creation: "apart from Him nothing made that was made"; "the worlds framed by the (Personal) Word of God" (John i. 3; Heb. xi. 3). Further, as for their origin, so for their continuous maintenance in order, beauty, life, all created things depend mediately, not directly, upon God, "*through*" Christ; the God of Providence, as of Creation, is God in Christ. [To a Christian, therefore, Providence is no mere bare, hard, perfect, governmental system, but the rule of a God with a heart; a God Whose heart has been seen and known in Christ. To a Christian, Providence is not only wisdom, but love; not only power, but grace.]

III. There is, further, **another Creation, another world,** with its order and beauty and life and government,—the spiritual; a glorious Sub-section, a grand Episode, in the larger Whole of God-originated, God-sustained Being; taking shape in a Church; repeated, too, in all its essential characteristics, but on a smaller scale, in the new order, beauty, happiness, rule, within the individual life of the Christian. Nowhere is it more true than of the Church and of the Christian, "*we are through Him*," viz. Christ. The Church, the individual believer, is nothing, has nothing, becomes nothing, could retain nothing, except through Christ. He and His work and grace are the great underlying, foundation, Condition, assumed in all God's dealing with them; presupposed in all the new creation from first to last. Remove Him from the facts of the case as between God and man, and all disappears,—Redemption, Pardon, the Grace of the Spirit; all life, knowledge, good; all hope, all heaven. ["Things which *are not*" have become and, moment by moment, subsist—"*we are*"—through Christ (i. 28, 30).]

IV. This once apprehended and made the working basis of thought and practice, "**An idol is nothing.**" [God and Providence once fully believed in and trusted, all Luck, Chance, Evil-eye, Omens, Astrology, and a host of heathenish fears and superstitions and sinful traffickings with demons and the dead, disappear from *Christian* life.] The image *may* have meant in better, earlier, [very occasional] instances an attempt to assist the worshipping instinct and craving in man to realise and approach some Presence vaguely apprehended and believed in, in Nature. But there could be no real correspondence between the idols and the true God. [Paul on Mars' Hill pointed across to the Acropolis of Athens, with its temples and statues. "God—**God that made the world**—dwells not even in such glorious shrines as those. God, whose offspring Men are, is no thing of stone or ivory or gold like even those."] There were—could be—no beings to be represented by the crowds of idols, "*gods many, lords many*," in every heathen pantheon. The one Divine Presence and Power and Ruler "*in the world*" is the God Whom we know; the idol stands for nothing, represents and makes visible no reality, signifies nothing—is a mere piece of carved or molten matter, a work of art perhaps, but nothing to be worshipped or feared, and has no meaning to the religious instinct. [Except *in the indirect sense* that the Adversary of God and of all good avails himself of the idol, to divert to himself and his "demons" the homage of the worshipping heart in men, and perverts into the occasion of gross sin the very ceremonial of the worship of heathen systems (x. 20).]

V. Hence follows a **complete emancipation of the use and enjoyment of the creature from any superstitious restrictions.**—All the creation of God is free to man, God's designated lord of creation. [Woods, streams, mountains are no longer haunted by, possessed by, a host of divinities.] No regard need any longer be had to any connection between a "divinity" supposed in the idol, and the thing useful or needful for man. The food which has been upon an idol altar has lost nothing nor gained anything in that fact. It was morally neutral before; intrinsically it is non-moral still to partake of it. [Hard for any except those to-day living or working in countries and societies beginning to be affected by Christianity, to realise what an emancipation it brings to mind and heart and practice to find the heathen pantheon, whether poetically beautiful or fearsomely dreadful, benignant or malevolent, swept away, and the world seen to be a great temple filled with God, and that God known in, ruling by, to be worshipped in, Christ. It is a revolutionising emancipation. The dread is gone, which perpetually overhung life; the shadow disappears from nature and from the future; there is a new sense of security and freedom. Men breathe freely, walk with a new buoyancy, move and work and enjoy, in a world whose atmosphere is filled with the presence of God in Christ.]

VI. One other fact is assumed as between Paul and his correspondents: **"Christ died even for a man who perishes."**—Redemption is no fatalism; no hard compulsion which necessitates ultimate salvation. Redemption has brought a grace to every man, which is the basis on which the Spirit and the man himself may co-operate to build up a saved life. All "natural" goodness, all the so-called "innate" knowledge of what is "right" and what "wrong," all "freedom" and "power" of will toward God and good, all the (often very strong) drawings toward God, and the (often very strong) holdings back from sin; all ability to respond to God's "command" that men should repent (Acts xvii. 30); all ability to believe with a saving faith; all knowledge of, sensibility to, love for, Divine things; all the light given even to the heathen;—all are fruits of the redemptive work of Christ, availing literally for all men. This may be followed up or sinned away. It is always enough to make condemnation just, if a man be unfaithful to it; whilst out of it may grow a true salvation. This makes Christ the "light which lighteth *every* man coming into the world" (John i. 5). Every man is born of a redeemed stock; because of a Redeemer's grace, every man may be saved. Whatever be the eternal issue of the life of the individual, or his present moral condition—however sunk or degraded or dark—the great facts of the Redeemer's work remain unalterably facts, independently of any use or neglect of them by the man himself. They are the foundation of all hope for the Christian worker, as he seeks to lift and save others; they are the basis of all work; they are the warrant for prayer for the salvation of souls.

VII. **Knowledge has its perils.**—1. Such knowledge *is no achievement* to be boasted of; it is a privilege, a mercy, a favour, a *grace*. The wisdom of the world does not "*know*" all this. It is to-day avowedly "Agnostic" in regard to all such questions. It will affirm nothing, will deny nothing; it has no scientific basis or right to say "*we know*." The ancient philosophies never reached any certain conclusions on such topics. Each teacher was successful rather in criticising his predecessor's system and logic than in constructing his own, or in bringing to any restful certainty the mind and heart. God was not, is not, found by searching. The Fatherhood, with its correlative Sonships, Divine and human, was never so much as guessed or suspected. The history of speculation and nquiry, ancient and modern, conclusively establishes this, that upon this last point we have to choose between believing a revelation and complete ignorance; and, further, that as to the existence, nature, unity, creative work, and providential government of God, nothing beyond guesses, which may ripen into hope,

are attainable by unassisted reason. 2. So, then, *knowledge should be*, (*a*) grateful, (*b*) humble, and (*c*) patient towards ignorance or less-advanced knowledge. There is a delight in the winning of knowledge which is intoxicating; there is a glorious sense of mastery when new ground has been occupied, when new worlds of facts have been possessed; the sense of enlargement reveals to a man how glorious a thing is his manhood, with its capacity for apprehending and appropriating such great truths. But the wise man should remember that all he knows is all a gift, a grace. He should be grateful. He should remember how limited, after all, is his knowledge at its widest, and be humble. "There remaineth yet much land to be possessed." He has only yet made and occupied a small clearing in a boundless forest of dark recesses and intricate growths. Above all, he needs to be patient to those who have not yet reached his point of advance and clear vision. [The sixth-form scholar is impatient with the first-form boy, that he cannot at once see what is to himself so obvious.] He must not forget the days when he was himself toilsomely climbing the hill whose top, with its broad horizon of knowledge, he has now reached. He must keep his sympathy for those whose knowledge is yet only in process towards the relative completeness which is, after all, all he has himself even now attained. Self-sufficiency, self-conceit, unsympathetic impatience with imperfect enlightenment, are some of the moral perils of the man "*puffed up*" with his "*knowledge*." [Even in merely secular, natural knowledge also, error is not far off when this is the temper of an inquirer; the student who would still go on to "know," must be humble, simple, docile to Nature and its facts. Carelessness and inaccuracy of methods, or their application, are also perils not far away from such students.]

B. **The teachings of love.**—1. Knowledge and love are in no necessary opposition. They are made for each other. Their union produces the perfect life. They are both found in closest alliance, each perfect, in God. No need to exalt love at the expense of knowledge. Knowledge is not sinful, or godless, *per se*. (See Paul's prayer for his beloved Philippians, i. 9.) The Godlike life needs, embodies, combines, both. Indeed, in the highest sense, and in regard to the highest things, love is the condition of knowledge. Only the man who "*loves God*," knows God; or (let us say) can have that life of fellowship with God whose not least precious privilege it is to rejoice to lie all open and "*known*" to the scrutiny of the eye of God. 2. Love without knowledge is liable to become fanatical, and easily led into mischievous error. Knowledge without love is apt to become, as we have seen, impatient of weakness, cold, hard, repellent, pitiless; in its self-contained, self-satisfied exaltation following out its conclusions to their rigorous, logical issues, regardless of the consequences in other lives. Apt to be lifted up to a mountain-top of self-glorification, and to forget or despise the struggling, troubled, tempted, weaker multitudes on the lower levels of common life. In the region of the clear, cold light of its definite convictions and assured conclusions, it walks confidently, securely, and does not understand or allow for the difficulties and perils of the lives which walk in the mists and darkness of weakness or half-enlightenment. The knowledge of the logical mind is specially liable to be cruelly reckless of what pressing perfectly warranted conclusions to their full length may cost to the men and women who cannot live by logic; who largely follow "*custom*," and with difficulty find their way into new paths, whether of belief or practice; who do not readily emancipate mind or "*conscience*" from long-established ideas, or prepossessions or prejudices; who find it harder than do the men of "*knowledge*," to unlearn the mental and moral habits and training of a lifetime. To such, for example, a public banquet in a heathen temple was not yet a thing simply of social and civil life. The place itself was not neutral ground, and the fact that some of the provisions had been offered

upon idol altars gave the very food upon the table a moral taint. Let the man of knowledge press them upon the point; they can give him—can give themselves—little or no satisfying reason for their instinctive shrinking from participation. "But you believe that there are no such gods as the idols represent?" "Yes." "And you believe, too, that the temple floor is part of the world which all belongs to your God?" "Yes." "And you surely see that a heathen divinity which is really non-existent cannot have affected the food put upon its altar?" "Yes. Y–e–s. But——" "And you understand that God takes no account of you, favourable or unfavourable, merely because of what you eat or don't eat, or drink?" "Yes." And yet the habit of regarding the banquet and the food as affected by its consecration to a god is not readily to be uprooted; conscience cannot see clearly yet that, because the idol is nothing, the effect upon the food is morally nothing. 3. Whilst, then, Knowledge lives too readily in an unreal world [almost in a moral *vacuum*], and takes too little account of the complexity of moral questions in the concrete of daily life, Love says to Knowledge: "Do not disregard the prejudice born of habit, and the difficulty born of half-enlightenment of conscience. Do not by your action force on too fast in his mental development, and in his moral growth, the less-advanced man next you in the Church. Do not stand too stiffly upon, nor exact for yourself too rigorously, the fullest liberty which in the abstract you might claim. His foundation will not carry your building as yours can. Remember he is likely to emulate you, disliking perhaps to be thought weak, fearing perhaps the scornful verdict implied in the very contrast with you; he will try to build as fast and as high as you; he will try to go as far. That respect for conscience and its teaching which is a primary principle of all moral life will be injured. It is part of the foundation of his character; you help him to disturb it. And then, with a shaken foundation, and a building too high for it, if even it were in unimpaired strength, no great wonder if he "*perish*"; beginning with violence done to his moral sensitiveness, he will go on to some more positive transgression, tempted by the scenes and company into which you embolden him to thrust himself. What wonder if all his ideas, his moral convictions, his practice, come toppling down in soul-destroying ruin! And if he "*perish*," what follower are you of that Christ "*who died*" to redeem and save him? "*Knowledge?*" "I see as clearly as any of you how absolutely nothing in intrinsic significance are all such accidents of the food I eat. They are nothing to it, or to me; they in no way affect my standing before God. But rather than even contribute to the moral wreck of even one soul, rather than spread a snare for an unwary or unsteady and uncertain foot, I will abstain always and in all circumstances from anything which creates difficulty or danger to my brother's soul." Hardly necessary to think that Paul in actual practice abstained from flesh-meat, except in the particular case here under discussion. The "I" is somewhat rhetorical. He is, in part, indirectly suggesting to a Corinthian what *his* heart ought to make him say.

## *HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.*

Vers. 1-3. *Knowledge weighed in the Balances against Love.*—The verdict is: "*Found wanting.*"

I. The reference is special—to knowledge in relation to Divine things. This is due to the special occasion out of which Paul's words have arisen. But **ver. 2 is true of knowledge on all subjects**, in any field of inquiry. 1. True knowledge will only be arrived at by the man who is a patient inquirer; recognising himself the servant, not the master or the maker, of Facts; acknowledging that truth is paramount, and before any question of his own reputation or consistency as a theorist or a teacher. He must never, in his confidence that "*he knows*," be so

wedded to his own first conclusions as not to admit their modification or complete setting aside, if new light and new facts be forthcoming, especially when these are the result of the inquiry and the work of others. He will be humble, recognising the limitations of his powers, of his field; that his results are often only provisionally and relatively true, and that when absolutely true they are only part of the whole Truth. Nature—Natural Science—has little or nothing to reveal to the man full of prepossessions or prejudices; who will not always have the spirit of a learner; who, confident in his own results, too promptly closes doors, and refuses to allow to himself further inquiry, or to new truth any entrance, in any particular direction. One of the surest results of the widest knowledge is the knowledge how much there is to know, and how little any one man can or does know. (Cf. Homily on "*We know in part*," xiii. 9.) 2. The humble, teachable, patient temper is still more emphatically a *sine quâ non* of all knowledge in relation to Divine things. "The little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Indeed, "the little child alone enters into," and so arrives at any true knowledge of, "the kingdom of heaven." The man of prepossessions—against Revelation or any part of its contents, or for Reason, making it the one, supreme *organon* of knowledge, and the sole test of truth; who will insist that everything, indeed, shall satisfy *his* reason—will arrive at no true knowledge of God. The man, in spiritual things "*wise in his own conceits*," is not really *wise*. To a "*spiritual*" man whom "*love*" has "*built up*" in real knowledge, it is amusing to hear the dogmatically confident pronouncements upon points of theology and the experimental life. [These two stand in the most intimate association. The heart makes the theologian. The knowledge of God and things Divine is a grace of the same Spirit Who awakens and sustains the experimental life of God within the soul. He will, He can, teach nothing to the man who is not first morally receptive.] He may be a very scantily educated, a very little cultured, man; but on these topics he says, with much pity and some amusement, "Ah, my wise friend, you *know nothing yet as you ought to know*."

II. **Of knowledge and love in contrast we say**: 1. Knowledge *puffs* the man up; love *builds* him up. Love is the basis of the noblest character; above all, of the distinctively *Christian* character. This begins in the love of God shed abroad in the heart; this awakens an answering love to God, "because He first loved us." Love lays all new knowledge under contribution for practical life; it is the supreme, the summarised, Law of life; it is the one adequate, self-acting, reliable, motive power, as well as the director of all *Christian* activity. Love and knowledge need each other. The sentence is antithetically strong in its form; but facts, and the reason of the thing, agree to make it clear that love alone cannot build up a strong character. Love without knowledge tends to become mere feeble sentimentalism; a mere impulsive, impressionable thing, at the mercy of the latest influence brought to bear. Knowledge ought to give "bone," rigidity, resistant power, to the spiritual "constitution." But knowledge alone can make no constitution; love is the health of the soul, without which all the food which knowledge brings, only "*puffs up*," not feeds. Thus increase of knowledge may become a real danger to the soul, unless it be turned to practical account, as a new ability to serve God and man better, in loving devotion to both. Turn all new light into new activity. Light should be force. "If ye *know*, happy are ye if ye *do*." 2. Knowledge puffs *the man himself up*; love seeks to build *others* up. Paul's point here. The clear, confident, instructed man, to whom all the idolatry of his old life was now a transparent sham, by the keen vision of his knowledge, seen through and through in all its empty unreality, was apt to be a selfish

man. Proud in his superiority to the vulgar, unreasoning prejudices of the common run of his fellow-Christians; puffed up with a sense of mental grasp and large view; his danger was to live for himself, to pursue his own course, reckless what souls he ran down and wrecked in the unfaltering, unswerving, severely logical, adherence to his own clearly traced path, followed out to its utmost logical consequences. The peril of knowledge is fastidiousness, intolerance, and lack of sympathy for other and less perfect views, a cruel insistence upon its own rights and liberty; *summum jus* working *summam injuriam*. Love in its very nature goes outside itself; looks at others, tries to understand their ignorance, the difficulties of their half-enlightenment, both of understanding and conscience; is patient with their slower progress, accommodates its own pace to their slower advancement. Mere knowledge pushes ignorance impatiently aside, and holds on its own way; love stops to help and encourage, and carry forward in its company to its own goal. Knowledge alone is apt to be the intellectual priest or Levite; Love stops to be the Samaritan, seeking to save and build up again the soul in peril, or perplexity, or ignorance. Knowledge says, "This people that knoweth not the law are cursed." Love says, "Come unto me, ye that are burdened and heavy laden; I will give you rest."

III. **Love, and not mere knowledge, brings into fellowship with God.**—The Devil knows—none better—how true is everything Paul asserts in this chapter. Conceivable that a man may acquire and retain a full, accurate, trained knowledge of the didactic and controversial literature of divinity in all its topics, whilst losing the love which brought him into union with God. But, the love gone, the life is gone; the link between God and the soul is sundered. If he do not love God, he cannot know God. [How constantly we say, "So-and-so will never know or understand me; he does not like me."] God will know him, indeed, as He knows all His works (Acts xv. 18). But He will "know the proud" man of knowledge "afar off" (Ps. cxxxviii. 6). There will be no love in God's knowledge. No affectionate, complacent regard, as a father knows his child, or a friend his friend. The man who loves knows God. They look into each other's heart, and know each other.

Ver. 6. *Christian Monotheism.*—The Jew was the monotheist of the ancient world. [Modern inquiry and fuller knowledge are making it clear that Cyrus was no such strict monotheist as until recently was supposed. Moreover, the Persian religion recognised as secondary, but *independent*, Being, the Author and Worker of evil. It was really Dualism, not Monotheism.] The Christian, as well as the Jew and the Mahometan, is a modern monotheist. "*To us there is but one God.*" The name "Unitarian" is now understood, and has become a convenience; but every Christian Trinitarian claims to be also in the true sense "unitarian": a monotheist in the strictest sense. (See also further in the Critical Notes.) This Christian belief in the unity of God by no means denies Godhead to the Lord Jesus Christ [or to the Spirit]. [It is understood that all language on this topic is negative of error, rather than positive assertion of truth, and must be accepted and used with that proviso. It walks on a narrow, edge-like path, with pitfalls of error, of overstatement, or deficient statement, on either hand.] With sufficient frequency to make belief in His Godhead secure, are Divine names given to Him, and a Divine position, in the language, affections, life, work, of the men of the New Testament. Yet, prevalently, the name "God" is given to the "Father." This verse is typical in its style of language in regard to Christ. 1. Something may be due to the "local colouring" of the men, their Jewish race and upbringing, their idolatrous age and surroundings. The unity of God still needed emphasising

in the presence of a polytheistic world. Also they had themselves known, or knew well those who had known, the Son of God,—had eaten with, lived with, seen, heard, handled, the Son in the familiar guise of the Man, Jesus, of Nazareth. Perhaps permissible, and in accordance with the analogy of all God's dealings, to say that they were not yet so far emancipated from their old monotheistic predispositions, as that their habitual *languaye* should yet fully express their actual belief in the Godhead of their Master. The heart did, but not yet fully their tongue. 2. More is due to the fact that from (say) Acts ii. 22 to (say) 1 John v. 20 the Spirit is, with increasing clearness, revealing the Divine Son. In this verse the language is still transitional. 3. But, after all, there is not only that degree of *relative* truth in the restricted attribute of the name "God" to the "Father"; there is also the *absolute* truth which has sometimes been called the "*Principatus*" of the Father. [Neither this, nor "subordination" in regard to the Son, may be overpressed. They are working conventionalisms of language, rather than exact statements of the whole truth; these latter are, indeed, impossible to us. In Pearson's well-known, cautious words (*Creed*, article i.), "*Some kind of priority* we must ascribe unto Him Whom we call the first, in respect of Him Whom we call the second. . . . Now this privilege or priority consisteth not in this, that the essence or attributes of the one are greater than the essence or the attributes of the other, . . . but only in this, that the Father hath that essence of Himself, the Son by communication from the Father." Above all, add to this, that New Testament language ordinarily has regard to the Father and the Son, as they are seen related, and active, in the working out of Redemption. 4. Multiplied, often verified, experiment in all ages, in all lands, in persons of all ages and types, has shown that, with the smallest exception, the Godhead of the "Lord Jesus Christ" has not only created no difficulty in regard to the Oneness of the Godhead, but has proved to be the truth which has satisfied alike the most cultured intellects and the simplest hearts. For the child, or the heathen, or the untrained adult mind at home, "Jesus" is the "God" with Whom their heart has practically to do. [A thing this, quite distinct from the formal, theologically precise Swedenborgian assertion that the One God is He Whom we know as the Son, Jesus Christ.] History and the reason of the thing show that

**I. Christian, Trinitarian Monotheism is the one form of teaching about God which has for any long period preserved unimpaired the doctrine of the unity of God.**—"The mere abstract unity of the Godhead, which does not include a multiplicity, soon leads to a cold and lifeless Deism; and as soon as it has reached this point, is forced to seek refreshment from the pantheistic religions of nature. After the Jews and Mahometans had rejected the idea of a Son who is of the same Divine essence with His Father, as idolatry, they were fated *to find their absolutely monotheistic conceptions of God utterly empty and lifeless*, so that they yearned after the warm vitality of Pantheism. This is a phenomenon which is clearly evident from the history of the Jewish philosophers (especially Spinoza) as well as of the Indian and Persian Pantheists. And so, too, it could not but happen that philosophical Pantheism should tread on the heels of German Deism and Rationalism. As long as Theism distinguishes only between God and the world, and not between God and God, it will always have a tendency to Pantheism, or some other denial of absolute Being. . . . (The) One has taken to Himself all life, and neutralises all the vital fulness of nature. We no longer feel love or joy. There is but One around whom all things move, and He is a cold, mathematical quantity, a point of pure abstraction. Abstract Monotheism has too little life-blood to offer

an enduring resistance to the pantheistic deification of nature. . . . In [the Trinity] we have a Unity; not, however, unloving and lifeless, a cold numerical One, but a complex of living and loving energies—a living Unity embracing a Plurality, and bearing the sacred name of Father, Son, and Spirit." [Christlieb, *Modern Doubt and Christian Belief*, pp. 266, 267. To similar effect, and very nobly, Huntington, *Christian Believing and Living*, pp. 343, 344, who says:] "Two errors divide the unchristianised world between them. Either the personality of God is sacrificed to the infinity, or the infinity is sacrificed to the personality. In the former case men may imagine that they recognise an Infinite Being; but it is only an abstraction, or a principle, or a bundle of laws, or a loose mass of sequences and phenomena, from which the attribute of infinity itself as well as of personal consciousness is soon found to have ebbed away. In the latter case the innate longing for a veritable Divine Person, with personal traits answering to ours, may be met; but it will soon begin to appear that, though a Person remains, the Eternal and Uncreated and Almighty God of glory is gone. . . . Both the errors spring from desires and demands of man's nature which in themselves are right. . . . Despairing to conceive of personality without limitation, some men rush over to Pantheism. Others, despairing of retaining a Deity near enough for love and sympathy who is literally infinite, stop short with a Deity who is not God. . . . [And he adds:] These implanted wants are wonderfully satisfied in the Divine Trinity. In the Absolute and one only Godhead, all man's highest, purest, largest, most far-reaching conceptions, stretching away into the regions of Infinitude, Eternity, Almightiness, have their full and complete exercise. In the Incarnate Christ, taking up our humanity, the longing for a personal, sympathising, companionable, Deity is blessedly answered—and yet God is there: there is no loss of the essential and veritable Deity. In the Holy Spirit, the natural desire of the devout mind to connect God with all the operations of the present world, the processes of Creation, the welfare, renewal, revolutions, sanctification of the Human Family, finds its lawful verification." "I have long thought that without an eternal Logos you must have an eternal cosmos; and I therefore suspect that *a mono-personal Theism is impotent against the Pantheist.* So that since the controversy has passed from its old atheistic phases, I doubt if either Deist, or Socinian, or Mahometan, will be able to cope with the Pantheist. In short, I doubt if any but a Trinitarian can do so adequately." (Dr. Duncan, in *Colloquia Peripatetica*, p. 96.)

II. "**The conception of the triune God** furnishes us with *the sole bridge that can fill up the breach between God and the world*, . . . the void which separates the transcendent unity of God from the rich and manifold organisation of natural life. . . . The Word which becomes incarnate, in order to do and suffer for mankind, and the Spirit who by His power begets fresh life, both stand between God and the world as mediate causes which not only render the creation of the world a possibility, but also guarantee the Divine presence in it, and its return to God. Here we have all the fulness and freshness of Pantheism combined with the truth of Monotheism, whilst the element in which the latter is wanting, viz. a real connecting link between God and the world, is here supplied. . . . [So particularly by the Incarnation and the Atonement.] We have a connecting link between God and man in the person of the Incarnate Logos, who is the eternal Archetype of the whole creation, and especially of man, and who for all future æons will be the head of the whole body. . . . The spiritual chasm which yawns between sinful man and the absolutely sinless God-man is filled up by the regenerating and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit. Hence the doctrine of the

Trinity affords the most important aids in determining our *practical* relation to God." (Christlieb, p. 270.)

(For the relations of this Doctrine to the spiritual life, see in the Critical Notes.)

Vers. 10-13. *The Rights of Conscience.*—N.B. of even an ill-instructed, half-enlightened, needlessly sensitive, conscience.

I. *It has rights* (1) as against the man himself. It claims to be listened to, and obeyed, especially when restricting liberty and condemning action. The man may grow more enlightened by-and-by, better instructed, clearer in view, and stronger in character. But, until he does, let him rigorously compel himself to obey conscience. The eye will so be kept healthy, and ready to receive new light; the ear will be kept sensitive, and ready to receive new direction from God. More hope, more possibilities, for a conscientious heathen than for a well-instructed Christian who at every step is doing violence to his clear knowledge of wrong and right. "To him that hath, (and is faithful to, even one talent of knowledge and light) shall be given (more light)." God is honoured, Whose gifts both the faculty and any degree of enlightenment it possesses are. Obedience to conscience is the germ out of which all true morality must grow. A man must not do what his conscience forbids. (2) As against the better instructed, fully enlightened Christian. Such a one must deal gently with the "weaker" brother. Especially may he need to abridge his own liberty for his sake. "No doubt, to the large, free, enlightened mind of Paul, all these scrúples and superstitions must have seemed mean, trivial, and small indeed. It was a matter to him of far less importance that truth should be *established,* than that it should be arrived at truly—a matter of far less importance, even that right should be done, than that right should be done *rightly.* Conscience was far more sacred to him than even liberty. . . . The scruple may be small and foolish, but it may be impossible to uproot it, without tearing up the feeling of the sanctity of conscience, and of reverence for the law of God, associated with the scruple. Therefore . . . Paul counsels . . . to abridge their . . . liberty. . . . For two reasons: the first, one of Christian feeling. It might cause exquisite pain to sensitive minds to see those things which appeared to them to be wrong done by Christian brethren. . . . Further, if any man, overborne by authority or interest were [to eat], not according to conscience, but against it, there would be a distinct and direct act of disobedience—a conflict between the sense of right, and the gratification of his appetites or the power of influence; and then his compliance would as much damage his conscience and moral sense as if the act had been wrong in itself." (Robertson, *Expos. Lectures, in loco.*)

II. Yet *conscience has no absolute right of acquittal.*—1. Look, *e.g.*, at 1 Cor. iv. 4: "I know nothing against myself, yet," etc. Conscience holds barely a "court of first instance." Every verdict must be reported to the Great Judge. He alone knows absolute wrong and right. Conscience is no independently authoritative fountain of law. It does good, though only provisional, service if (as here) a man is led to use what is perhaps an excess of caution. It cannot blamelessly enlarge liberty, if the enlargement mean sin. Conscientious ignorance can only be "excused" when it has led to "sin," if the man be, as the foundation of all his *status* before God, a sinner trusting in Christ, and if he have also sought for light with all simplicity and earnestness, and have followed, as before God, all the light he has. 2. Also no regard for another man's scruples or ignorance may require a Christian to suppress or conceal truth, or to do what to himself is wrong. His conscience in its turn has its rights, and must be obeyed. [Indeed, obviously, the whole field within which Paul's counsel and its underlying principle

are binding or operative, is a narrow one, limited to questions not of absolute, abiding, universal, wrong and right, but only to the *relative* wrong and right which may vary according to the circumstances of the man or the time, to expediency, or the demand of brotherly forbearance.] ["*Christ died*" for such! How much will you deny yourself of to save a soul from difficulty or temptation? What father will not banish drink from his table, if his boy is in danger? What teacher will not dress more quietly, if her Sunday scholars are in danger of pleading her example to defend their vanity or waste in dress? What friend will not give up his cards, or his novel, or his opera, if his practice is a stumbling-block, or a real temptation, to his friend—though perhaps very illogically and unfairly so? It would not be the Spirit of Christ which says: "Why should I give up my novel, my billiards, my opera, my alcohol, my cards, for the sake of these poor creatures who cannot use without abusing? For the sake, *e.g.*, of these children, these new converts, these narrow and prejudiced 'evangelicals'!"]

## CHAPTER IX.

### *CRITICAL NOTES.*

Ver. 1.—Notice the reversed order of clauses in the better-attested reading. **Free.**—*I.e. quâ* man; he is always Christ's "bondservant"; it is of his own choice that he submits to such limitations (vers. 19-22) upon his liberty as, *e.g.*, in viii. 13; or as this in question, that he should maintain himself by his manual labour, whereas he was also "*free*" to demand Church maintenance for himself if he had chosen. **Apostle.**—He had once been the Apostle (*Sheliach*, the Talmudic equivalent) of the Jewish authorities at Jerusalem to the synagogue in Damascus. [In this, etymological, sense and employment of the word Barnabas is called an apostle (Acts xiv. 14). So the same popular, freer use derived from the Jewish practice lingers in 2 Cor. viii. 23 (of Luke and the bearers of the "collection"), in Phil. ii. 25 (of Epaphroditus). The sense of "among the apostles" as including Andronicus and Junias (Rom. xvi. 7) is very disputable, especially if the latter name be a woman's, "Junia."] Now a greater High Priest had sent him forth as His messenger and representative. For this the two needful qualifications were, to have had his commission direct from Christ's own lips ["I send thee" (Acts xxvi. 17), putting him on an equality with those who heard Him say, "Go ye therefore," etc. (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20)], and to be able, at first hand, and not merely by hearsay or report of others, to assert as a fact within his own knowledge that the Crucified Christ was risen again and was then really living [putting Paul on the footing of Peter and the rest, who could say, Acts v. 32; cf. Acts i. 22 (very explicit); cf. 1 John i. 1]. Important *for us* that the first link of the chain of historical evidence and testimony should be sound. [If indeed the *uniqueness* of the position of the apostles in their special selection, commission, and qualification for this testimony, out of the witnesses of xv. 6, does not make them, not merely the first link, but the strong staple, holding the first link, and itself driven into the solid rock of the facts. The Apostolic company mediated between the Great Fact—the Living, Risen Christ—and the long succession of Christian teachers who must needs receive the truth on evidence of others (supported, indeed, by the subjective evidence of their experience of His working). **My . . . in the Lord.**—Observe how the second phrase guards, almost corrects, the first. [Cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 23, 24: *Christ's* grace; *my* love.] No independent work; no success of his own. He has no wisdom, strength, success, except as his whole life is "*in Christ*"; and thus Christ wins the success and does the work through him. It is Christ's working and power; it is only a question which of the members of the Body He shall employ for any particular part of the great task, and to which shall be "credited" the particular share of the great total result.

Ver. 2. **To others.**—*Q.d.* in their opinion, and by their recognition, "*I am not.*" Notice "*at least*," R.V. **Seal.**—As by-and-by his "crown" (Phil. iv. 1), and, then and now, his "joy" (*ib.*). "At Corinth, at all events, there can be no doubt of the original validity of my commission, or whether it be still running and valid."

Ver. 3. **Answer.**—*Apologia*, as, *e.g.*, Acts xxii. 1; 2 Tim. iv. 16. A forensic word, like "*examine*," as, *e.g.*, in Acts iv. 9, xxiv. 8, xxviii. 18; (1 Cor. iv. 3-5).

Ver. 4. **Power.**—In the sense of "*right*"; so in ver. 12, "*to eat and to drink*," *q.d.* at the expense of the Church.

Ver. 5. **Sister.**—In the Christian sense, parallel to "*brother*" (1 Cor. v. 11, etc.); "*a wife*" who is also a Christian "*sister*." **The brethren of the Lord.**—Three long-discussed, influentially sustained, theories: (1) Children of Mary and Joseph, born after Jesus (the *Helvidian* theory); (2) Children of Joseph by a former wife (the *Epiphanian*); (3) Cousins of Christ, children of Mary the sister of the Virgin, assumed also to be the wife of Alphæus (*Jerome's* theory). Probably the *data are insufficient* for a sure conclusion, agreement in which would otherwise long ago have been arrived at. (1) is unquestionably the most natural impression to be gathered from the Gospel history and from the word "brethren." (2), and in a degree (3), no doubt originated, or found a very strong motive for their propagation and acceptance, in a desire to save the "perpetual virginity" of Mary. (1) accounts best for the prominence in the Church at Jerusalem of the James of Acts xv. and of Paul's Epistles. **Cephas.**—Matt. viii. 14. [Very precarious speculation has seen another touch of Peter's domestic life in 1 Pet. v. 13, and yet more precariously has made his wife the "elect lady" of 2 John, because of 1 Pet. v. 13, which is only "the elected one (fem.) at Babylon."]

Ver. 6.—Barnabas was a rich landowner in Cyprus (Acts iv.), and needed neither to work for his living nor to ask the Church to maintain him. If (with Bishop Lightfoot, Gal. ii. 11) we make Paul's rebuke of Barnabas's vacillation occur during Acts xv. 30-40, they may have started together with a "soreness" which made Barnabas (or both of them) tenderly irritable, and helped to the "quarrel" (so-called) about John Mark. This the earliest mention of Barnabas by Paul after the separation. [The spirit of even this passing mention may be paralleled by John Wesley's persistent kindness of thought and speech to and about Whitefield, after their separation over the Calvinist controversy.]

Ver. 7.—Matters little whether the master or the employé in the vineyard, the owner or only the hired shepherd, be intended. Probably the former. As to the soldier, note the R.V.

Ver. 8. **As a man.**—Found in Rom. iii. 5 (cf. vi. 19); 1 Cor. iii. 3, ix. 8, xv. 32 (Gal. i. 11, plur.), iii. 15; "*after man*," as a pattern or norm, but with varying shades of meaning. Here: "According to the sense of what is right, customary amongst men." Not only does the common judgment of mankind bear him out in his contention, but God has delivered His mind also.

Ver. 9.—"Deut. xxv. 4, quoted also in 1 Tim. v. 8, is very conspicuous for its unexpected, sudden, and momentary reference to cattle amid matter quite different" (Beet). [But the whole chapter looks like a succession of legislative *dicta*, "entered up" in the statute-book with no order or connection beyond that of their succession of actual enactment as the occasion arose.] An instance carrying a far-reaching principle in regard to the interpretation of the Old Testament. If some enactments seem vague, impracticable, trivial, or even minutely vexatious, "unworthy of the attention of such a Book and of God," we may say: 1. A trivial case may carry a great principle. 2. Some simple precepts have large analogical meanings when transferred to spiritual things. 3. The *çy près* principle applies here, as in all legislation which is affected by changing circumstances. 4. Only fair to the Bible to bring in common sense, to explain or apply, as in ordinary life. True order of thought, in this and all similar instances, is *not up from* the temporary, "trivial" case to the higher spiritual analogy, but *down from* this to the lower and lesser. In this small enactment we are touching a widely applicable principle of the Divine order, in a very lowly, temporary embodiment. N.B.—This "law of *Moses*" is also what "*God* saith."

Ver. 10. **Our sakes' altogether.**—Not denying the early, lower intention of God, who *does*, in this passage, "*take care for oxen*." Similar to "I have loved Jacob, and *hated* Esau"; or rather to "I will have mercy, and *not* sacrifice"; where evidently the negation is not absolute, but comparative, in its force. **Our.**—Hardly to be narrowed to mean only Christian ministers. Note the change of reading, and of consequent rendering. "*Partaker of his hope*" meant, "Enjoying the reward he hoped for as he laboured." This also a general principle, not specialised until vers. 11 and 14, but a point of Divine "political economy," which should be embodied in (say) the relations between capital and labour.

Ver. 12.—Cf. 2 Cor. xi. 12.

Ver. 13.—Stanley sees in this resumed argumentation, and in the reiteration in ver. 14 of what had been said in ver. 11, the probable sign of a resumption of the letter after some pause. [As perhaps a change of amanuensis, or a new morning's work. Cf. 2 Cor. x. 1. He presses also "*I wrote*," in ver. 15.] Lev. vi. 16, 26; Num. xviii. 8-19. See in connection with viii. 1.

Ver. 14. **The Lord** Christ *hath ordained*.—Matt. x. 9 *sq.*, Luke x. 7 are quoted [not necessarily from *written* Gospels] as in vii. 10.

Ver. 15. **Used.**—As in ver. 12. "Have not availed myself of my right, nor urged upon you the Law of Moses and the Lord Christ's command." For Paul's sensitiveness about being

misunderstood, see Phil. iv. 11, 17. **Glorying.**—"Boasting." Twenty-nine times occurring in a few chapters of these two Epistles (especially in 2 Cor. x., xi., xii.), and only twenty-six times in all his other writings. (Farrar; who compares the "puffed up" of 1 Cor. *passim*, elsewhere only Col. ii. 18.)

Ver. 16. **Though.**—Better "*if*" (R.V.).

Ver. 17.—Choose between two slightly divergent lines of interpretation: (1) In so far as I act voluntarily in foregoing my right to maintenance, I have my reward; in so far as I act without my choice, but under compulsion of the "*woe*," I am only His servant, His steward but His bondslave, whose whole service is duty, and needs no thanks; and what then is my reward, that I should thus preach gratuitously? Why, the ability to appeal to men with the more effect, because I am independent (as in vers. 19, 20). My concessions to them have greater force of appeal. (2) More usually, the "reward" is taken simply to mean (as ver. 18) the privilege, and the satisfaction to himself, of preaching gratuitously. But this would have no self-centering value to Paul, and only would be to him desirable as giving him the vantage-ground for vers. 19, 20. Evans (in *Speaker*) thinks that vers. 19, 20 formally specify the "*reward*"; most find it in ver. 18. The "*reward*" is hardly one given by God. If it be, yet the act rewarded is done in strength which is entirely grace. There is no such independent worthiness in the man as to claim reward as a right; yet it is fitting that the right act should have its recognition from God. Stanley, happily, says: "This contradiction [*i.e.* of ver. 16 to ver. 15] is . . . specially characteristic of the Apostle's style when he speaks, as here, of 'boasting.' He can hardly mention a 'boast' without instantly recalling it." He adds: "In one sense he clings to his boast, in another sense the necessity of preaching the Gospel sweeps it away. And thus the construction of ver. 17 was probably meant to be, 'Whether willingly or unwillingly, I have a stewardship entrusted to me.'" But (he proceeds to suggest) probably as in 2 Cor. v. 13, with a sudden change of conception (cf. viii. 3) an intrusive thought gets into the former clause.

Ver. 19.—Well expounded in Gal. v. 13, compared with ver. 1.

Ver. 20.—Keeping the great feasts and observing vows, circumcising Timothy, [but not Titus].

Ver. 21.—"*Under law*" in both cases. Too absolute to say that without the article "*law*" *in general*, and with the article, *the Mosaic law*, are meant. Truer statement in Cremer, *Lexicon*: "The article is usually wanting where stress is laid not upon its historical impress and outward form, but upon the conception itself; not upon *the law* which God gave, but upon *law as given by God*, and as, therefore, the only one that is or can be. So especially in passages where the article is alternately found and omitted, Rom. ii. 14, 15, etc. But that *νόμος* without the article also means the law which was given to Israel, is clear most manifestly from Rom. v. 13" (pp. 430, 431). Augustine's "law" for a Christian life, "Dilige, et quod vis fac," is not *practically* enough. Christian liberty is within the bounds of the will of another—*Christ* "*the Lord*." And this is now the great law of "*God*": "Be ye under the law and will of The Son, Christ." (Cf. John vi. 29.)

Ver. 22. **All . . . all . . . all . . . some.**—If only he could have said "*all*" in the fourth instance! But some will "perish for whom Christ died" (viii. 11); no great wonder, then, if some are not saved for whom Paul preached, and used this holy, self-sacrificing versatility, but all in vain! Obviously "*all things*" has its limits. "To do wrong can *save* no one" (Beet).

Ver. 23.—"That I may obtain, in company with these whom I hope to save, the blessings promised in the Gospel" (Beet). Good exposition in 1 Tim. iv. 16.

Ver. 24.—His own salvation is at stake as well as that of his hearers. He must do all these things, not only as expedients which for his hearers' sakes may make him a successful soul-winner, but because to do everything he can to ensure success is to discharge faithfully his "*stewardship*" (ver. 17), and is thus one condition of his final acceptance when he comes to the goal. The comma after "run" in the A.V., and, still more, the "even so run" in the R.V., makes it clear that the reading should not be carelessly taken to be, "Run so that ye may," nor, "So run as that ye may." "*So*" looks not forward to "*that ye may obtain*," but backward, to the way racers run who know that they are competitors, the success of one of whom means the failure of all the others. This is not a maxim standing alone and meaning, "Do you run your Christian course in such a manner as to ensure that you will win the prize." It is a picture gathering up the scene on which Paul and his hearers are gazing. "See the sustained straining, and the concentration of energy; see how nothing diverts attention from the Prize; see the fierce eagerness of competition; remember the long, self-denying training for that moment of supreme effort. That is the way to win your Crown. Run your course *like that—so—thus*—if you mean to attain."

Ver. 25.—Racing, boxing, wrestling, all kinds of athletic contests "*for the mastery*." See the R.V. rendering. The Olympic games were in Paul's time still celebrated, and survived the Isthmian, which, however, were more familiar to the Corinthians, and at the time were more important. Nero contended in them, with "an agony to succeed" (Stanley). Ten

months' preliminary training—dieting, etc.—was obligatory on every competitor. [The metaphor of the foot race is found not only in Phil. iii. 12, 14; 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8 (Heb. xii. 1); but in briefer phrases—Acts xii. 25, xx. 24; Gal. ii. 2; Phil. ii. 16; Gal. v. 2; 2 Thess. iii. 1; perhaps Rom. ix. 15, 16. (See Dean Howson, *Metaphors of St. Paul.*)] **A corruptible crown.**—At the Isthmus this was of Grecian pine leaves; because these were so valueless intrinsically, the more to be admired was the eagerness of the competitors.

Ver. 26. **Uncertainly.**—With no definite goal, keeping to no particular track. **Beating the air.**—As if fighting a shadow, or merely "lunging about" for practice to the muscles. "It is no 'practice,' but the serious contest, I am engaged in."

Ver. 27.—See Homiletic Suggestions. **Buffet** for "*keep under.*" Lit., by derivation, "Give it a blow that bruises it under the eye—to keep it in its place, as servant, not master.

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 1—14.

*The Support of a Stipendiary Ministry.*

I. **What the minister has a right** (vers. 4-6) **to expect from his people.**—Maintenance (ver. 14). This **right** rests upon: (1) The natural fitness and "right" of the case (vers. 7, 11, 12); (2) The Old Testament legislation (vers. 8-10), definitely endorsed and adopted in (3) The words of Christ (ver. 14).

II. **What the people have a claim to expect from the minister.**—(1) That he have all needful credentials (vers. 1, 2); (2) That he do his work; he actually "preaches the Gospel" (ver. 14).

III. **What Christ has a right to expect from His servant.**—That in claiming, or enforcing, or using his "right" he shall not "hinder" his Master's Gospel.

I. The central verse of this section is ver. 14. All turns around this. 1. To some ears the "rights of the ministry" has an ugly sound. The minister is often expected to be above such considerations, and to let nothing be heard from himself but how he feels the call of his "duties" press upon him. So he does, if he be a minister worthy the name. He comes into the ministry with a "*woe*" in his ears, as the penalty of any alternative course. He preaches to his people—rich *and poor*—that Rights mean Duties. The poor need to have this preached to them as certainly as the rich. But Duties also mean Rights. If the "call" of Christ and His Church be such as to indicate that he must make the ministry the one business of his life, then he must be maintained whilst he is fulfilling his "calling." 2. Paul is discussing the case of the Apostolate. It was no doubt a unique order of men, charged with a function for the Church of their own time, and for the Church of all time, which cannot be repeated by any other set of men, and never *needs* to be repeated. Once for all they have set Christian dogma upon the firm basis of History. (See Critical Notes.) But the analogy holds good, *in this particular matter*, between the case of these unique and extraordinary servants of Christ and of the Churches and the ordinary ministry. The inspired and authoritative declaration of ver. 14—whether paraphrased from, *e.g.*, Matt. x. 9, or a divinely guaranteed report of an unwritten word of Christ (similar to the case of Acts xx. 35)—*generalises* the application of the principle. 3. The "*ordinance*" of Christ foresaw, took account of, provided against, a separated ministry. The Body of Christ has simply, and from the necessity of the case,—a necessity recurring in connection with every growing, enlarging, organisation whatsoever,—followed the analogy—"the law"—of all organised structures in Nature. As complexity increases, as the demands of the organisation multiply and are differentiated, so the organs which meet the demands are multiplied, and become *specialised* in their function and faculty. The specialisation of work and of officials in the Body began in Acts vi., when the apostles ceased to attempt to do everything in the Church, and "Deacons" (so-called) were told off to a special portion of what had been included in their work. A simple Church, independent of

organised fellowship, of small numbers, of simple requirement, may reproduce the early simplicity of pastoral and official organisation. But as it grows, and, above all, if a system of grouped, affiliated, connexionalised, organised Churches comes to form a new Church, it becomes a matter of expedient division of labour to set apart a pastorate, who will need, and should give, a whole and undivided attention to the teaching and "ruling" needed by the enlarged work and community. 4. "A *paid* ministry" is a theory and a practice which may reasonably be criticised and objected to; but a "*sustained, supported* ministry" is a necessity of the case. The man must "*live*" of the Gospel; not "starve" or "struggle" upon it. His "flock" should do their utmost to see that the shepherd is not the worst fed of them all; they should set him free from need and care. And ver. 5 enlarges the range of this principle of necessary, suitable support. "*Life*" is not merely food, clothes, house, bed, books, cut down to a *minimum* of possibility. A "living" is not merely what will keep the man himself out of want. The apostle, or his ministerial successor, *is a man*, for all he has been called into, thrust into, office. In all ordinary conditions full, all-round *manhood means marriage*, a "*wife*," a home, perhaps children. Celibacy like Paul's, should always be the exceptional thing, and never compulsory. It has cut off the ministry from the manhood of the Church, in regard to the sympathy which comes from, and only by, experience. It has morally been a snare to the ministry itself, and often a curse to the community. The "*fork*" of rigid ecclesiastical legislation cannot "*expel Nature*" from the man, merely because his work becomes specialised, and he himself is separated in order to do it the more effectively. The "*recurrence*" and the revolt of outraged Nature have often been disastrous, and full of disgrace, to the Christian, and the ministerial, name. The man, though made a minister by the expediency and the necessity of circumstances, has the "*right to lead about a wife*"; to have his own home, with its solace and its support. And the "*living*" covers the needful, suitable provision for this also. His "*right*" is "authority." His Lord authorises him to *requisition* his support from his people. This "right" is manifestly in accord with: (1) *The fitness of things*, and the analogy of ordinary human affairs. Whether he be master or servant, the vine-dresser may reasonably expect that his vineyard shall at least sustain him whilst he cultivates it; the shepherd, be he sheep-master or shepherd-man, may hardly be expected to render all his service gratuitously, or to be content that all the produce and advantage shall go to others, who have done nothing, whilst he goes unsupplied. [Cf. the (perhaps) Virgilian protest:—

> "Sic vos non vobis nidificatis aves,
> Sic vos non vobis vellera fertis oves,
> Sic vos non vobis mellificatis apes,
> Sic vos non vobis fertis aratra boves.
> His ego versiculos feci; tulit alter honores."]

The minister can indeed never urge the claim of the Owner of the Vineyard (Isa. v. 2); "the Great Shepherd of the sheep" (Heb. xiii. 20), "Whose own the sheep are" (John x. 12), has a claim which no under-shepherd can advance; but, though the "wages" theory is no satisfactory or suitable one for the money-relations between minister and people, the workman might ever claim his "wages," the under-shepherd his "pay," his "keep." Paul and his fellow- or successor-ministers are soldiers on campaign. The war is urgent; there is no respite in the campaign. Discipline and duty, under ordinary circumstances, both forbid that the soldier should need to go foraging for his rations, or should need to combine with his soldiering some other means of support. He must not be "entangled with the affairs of this life" (2 Tim. ii. 4). The side-occupations, the by-employments, to which he might have to resort, might easily impair his

own spirituality, and so his efficiency; indeed, in them he might easily be tempted to do some business with the Enemy. The Enemy will be his provider readily enough, if only he can so divert him from his campaigning and soldierly duty. He looks to his Captain for his support, and his Captain bids him draw upon the Church. They must "honour" the Captain's draft, and find the soldier's "*salt-money*." And are they not, moreover, themselves in debt to the minister? They owe to him their "*spiritual things*," "their own selves also" (Philem. 19). It is not repayment, it is only due acknowledgment of their indebtedness, that they should give him such "*carnal things*" as his need requires. Indeed, it is "*sowing*" and "*reaping*." Will they begrudge, or deny, him a handful, and that of the less valuable produce, of the harvest in their lives, springing, too, from his sowing? Religion means to many, new habits, a new character, God's blessing, which are very directly and obviously productive, even in their business career (Matt. vi. 33; 1 Tim. iv. 8). Many a man thus indirectly owes wealth and position—"*carnal things*"—to the minister whose labours first sowed the seed of eternal life in his heart. "How much owest thou unto thy Lord?" "How much owest thou to thy Paul, thy minister?" If any man should see to it that the ministry is supported, it is that man who owes to the faithful, sympathetic pastor and friend his conversion; his Sabbaths of blesssing, which mean new inspiration for his best life, and multiplying, propagating, reproductive, spiritual help for the work of the weekdays; the spiritual influences in his home; the conversion of his children. Corinth at least should have felt the obligation to see to it that Paul wanted for no "*carnal things*." All this is embodied in (2) *The Old Testament legislation.* (See Critical Notes.) He will take the Jews on their own familiar ground. They did "hear the Law" (Gal. iv. 21). Then to the Law they shall go. [No need to disparage such a style of argument, because the Rabbis to an absurd extent so "targumed" Old Testament passages. Their "targum" often employs a perfectly legitimate method, and lays bare a true, Divine, and abiding significance in the temporary or "trivial" enactment or story. The question is in any case one of evidence, and is not to be dismissed with a sweeping, preliminary *dictum* condemning all. Does Paul's "targum" approve itself to the spiritual judgment of the profoundest—not always, or of necessity, technically the most "learned"—students of the Word of God? An interpretation of an Old Testament passage occurring, employed, in the New Testament, is adopted, sanctioned, guided, by the Inspiring Spirit.] The great principle in the mind of the Lawgiver is found in Deut. xxv. 4, in a miniature, temporary, special, concrete form. *De minimis curat hæc lex*, and for greater matters also. The oxen are not deemed unworthy of His "*care*," indeed; but they are part of man's world, and God is caring for man, is caring for apostles; for workmen of every order and degree, but with not least solicitude for the "*workmen*" in the Church (ver. 1). The temporary colour washes out of this, as out of so many more, Mosaic ordinances, and leaves us with perhaps a little, but a real, piece of a stuff made for everlasting wear. Your Apostolic, ministerial "*ox*" plods his way, and hauls along, his heavy drag week after week, year in, year out. Do not muzzle his mouth, or grudge him his mouthful! Such enactments are part of the whole Revelation of God's mind and will. (3) "*The Lord*" knew His Father's mind in this, as in all else, and has put upon the old principle His own universal, generalised shape—the Teacher and Legislator as He is, for a Race and for all Time—and has put it on the Statute-book of His kingdom, "*that they who preach . . . shall live*," etc. His word is final. Beyond it no Church can go, nor behind, nor beside it. The minister's "*right*" is formally enacted by the King Himself.

II. **But the Church has its claim in the matter also.**—If a man—though he be a "minister"—work, he has a right to eat. If a man will not work—minister

or any man—neither shall he eat. And the man whom the Church is asked to sustain should be unchallengeably a "minister," who—

1. *Can produce his credentials.*—Paul could. Point by point he could match the "letters of ordination" produced by Cephas or "*the brethren of the Lord*," or by any other teacher whatsoever. Once more (as shown in Critical Notes) it is to be remembered how exceptional were the case and the credentials of an "apostle" [in the strict, narrow sense of the title]. But as in the natural so in the spiritual world, no work of God is isolated. Every fact has its relations, generally its analogies, to many adjacent facts. Evolutionary science has that much of right, in its teaching that a deep, close-drawn unity of idea runs through all the works of God. Earliest and latest, simplest and most complex, lowliest and highest, are all bound together into One Work of God. The Miracle has its relations to the Ordinary; it is not a mere isolated marvel. The Apostolic office was the exceptional, the extraordinary; but it was traced upon lines which are also the foundation lines of the draft of the Ministerial Office. So far as the diversity of facts allows, the analogy holds good between both the apostolate and the ministry. The credentials of both are analogous. The minister of Christ who holds a valid commission, and who may claim support from the Church, has (*a*) "*seen the Lord*," and he so preaches with "the demonstration of the Spirit" (ii. 4) that he can appeal to a people who are his work "*in the Lord.*" (On this last point, see the Critical Notes.) He must himself have come into real, personal relations with Christ, and in the indwelling strength and wisdom of Christ he must have been successful in bringing some others into real, personal relations with Christ too. The two things hang together very closely. No man who has really received his commission from Christ, and has by a holy watchfulness kept himself from all which would sever the living, life-giving, strength-imparting connection with Christ implied in being "*in Him*," will ever be long together without his accrediting, manifest "*work.*" On the other hand, no man will ever accomplish such "*work*" who has not first "*seen the Lord.*" He must "know Christ"—and that in the widest sense, and to the fullest content of the idea of "knowing" Him—at first hand; hearsay will not do. He will be a theoriser, a speculator, a critic, but not a witness. Like Thomas, like Paul, he must have stood in the presence of the Risen, Glorified Christ, and seen, as by a flash of holy intuition (or rather by the demonstration of the Great Preacher of Christ, the Holy Ghost) One before Whom intellect and heart have bowed down in trustful, reverent, loving adoration, recognising, "My Lord and my God!" And he must often have renewed the holy vision; must often "stand in the Presence" of his Lord, like an ancient prophet [*e.g.* Jonah i. 3; or like a very angel, Luke i. 19]. And his people will know it. (*And they will know it if he has not!*) He will speak with a power which their heart and conscience will recognise and will respond to. In his bearing, his words, perhaps his very face, they will see as they gather before him what will make them say, "*He has seen Christ Jesus the Lord!*" He will be unhappy, and a failure, if his ministry lack this qualification. This will give it a perpetual freshness; every other source of suggestion, every other class of topic, will soon be exhausted, and will soon cease to satisfy hungry souls in his flock. The mere graces of diction, the mental furnishing of mere literary or educational acquirements, will in the long-run do no "*work*," certainly none such as is "*in the Lord.*" A real Church recognises such a man as a true "minister." His credentials are "*read and known of all*" (2 Cor. iii. 2). They will sustain such a man, especially will they who are "*his work.*" (*b*) No tie so tender, no gratitude so deep, as that between the convert and the man who led him to Christ, between the sheep who is in himself a token of the seeking, patient, watchful, helpful love and work of a real Shepherd. Unhappy the man who year after year can show no "*work*"!

2. *He should be a man who does his work*, that for which he was "called" by his Master. (For an examination of the phrase "*preach the Gospel*," see Homiletic Suggestion on ver. 14.) The idler has no "*right*." The Church has a claim against the man that he shall show cause for his "*wages*," if his idleness bring down the question so low as to become one of work and pay. The work of the true minister of Christ is many-sided, of many types; hardly any line of study but may be made contributory to the cause of the Gospel. Some are set for the defence of the Gospel. The ministerial scholar, or editor, or botanist, or historical student, or tutor, or antiquary, may, if he will, consecrate his work and make it subservient to the cause of Christ's Gospel. "If he will,"—*but he must.* It must converge, of his set purpose, upon Christ. It is a grave question, to be decided as the several cases arise, how far subsidiary occupations of time and strength should be allowed or pursued by the man who, to the necessary basis of natural qualifications for the preacher and pastor, has also the two essential marks above analysed (1. and 2.). In the widest sense he should "wait on his ministering." The Church has that claim.

III. **Abstract right may be carried to a very mischievous length of practical exposition and enforcement.**—The Gospel is not made for the apostle, but the apostle for the Gospel. If the claims of these should seem to clash or compete, the claim and need of the Gospel must stand first. Nothing, not even the abstract "*right*" of a Paul, must be allowed to "*hinder the Gospel of Christ.*" The very "*right*" is only given, indeed, for the sake of the furtherance of the Gospel; it is for the advantage of the Gospel, under all ordinary circumstances, that the ministry should be maintained by the Churches. But in Paul's case, as he believed, circumstance made it for the advantage of the Gospel, or at least for the obviating of disadvantage and detriment, that his right, the very "*ordinance*" of his Lord should be waived and should stand aside. To him "**to live**" was "**Christ**,"—that dear Name gathered up to itself all Paul's activities, all his devotion; every motive received its impulse and its direction from that Christ. Of his own eager self-devotion, therefore, he readily *chose* to set his right aside. His heart and reason, the heart and reason of the true minister, would say that the Lord had the claim upon him that he should. Such a man will, *e.g.*, uphold, or waive, his pastoral prerogatives in a meeting; he will defend himself, or let judgment go against him in silence, when he is misjudged or misrepresented; he will resist, or yield to, the opposition of "unreasonable and wicked men"; as, from one case to another, the interests of the Gospel of Christ may seem to require. In any case of doubtful character the balance will perhaps always be more readily given against himself. It is his debt to his Master that it should be. The Gospel of the Master deserves that consideration!

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 15—23.

*Subject: The Independence of the Minister.* The central word of this section is "**Free**" (ver. 19).

I. **Free from all men.**
II. **Free, yet under compulsion to preach.**
III. **Free, yet under willing bondage to men's weakness and ignorance.**

I. [Sufficient said, in Critical Notes and in Analysis of preceding section, as to the literal, special sense in which Paul used the word and asserted his "freedom." But the freedom, and the independence it gave him, as well as the ground of appeal with which it "*rewarded*" him in his approach to men of all classes, coming to them, as he did, a man under obligation to no man,—all these points

have their widely applicable analogies in the relations between minister and people still.] 1. *If he is to be faithful, he must be free.* His people, if they know their own interests, need that he shall be faithful; they should therefore carefully, for their own sakes, if for nothing else, guard against anything which would even appear to put constraint upon him, or limit his freedom of judgment or action. [*E.g.* the rich man should, with even "gentlemanly" feeling, and much more with a fine sense of Christian propriety, carefully abstain from doing or saying what might seem to "put the screw on," and the more so if the minister lives very much upon supplies drawn from his pocket. The strong politicians in the Church should let the minister's politics alone. And so on.] If they want a "man of God" amongst them, who will lift them out of the secular round to a higher level with its larger life, let them give him all freedom to say out all that God gives him to speak. [A Homiletical Commentary of the character of this is not the place in which to deal with the question of the degree of liberty in doctrinal teaching a Church should permit or prescribe to their minister.] Let the congregation, or the meeting, or the council which may be its official representative, for their own good jealously guard their minister's fullest liberty for feeding and ruling the flock as their pastor. 2. *His* independence will not be a thing to be obtruded in every face, or a banner to be flung out ostentatiously in every petty skirmish or bit of friction. There are boasters of their "independence" who are simply offensively discourteous in speech; their "freedom" of tongue is only the expression of coarseness of feeling and of mere vulgar pride and self-assertion, in season and out of season. [So Robertson, *Expos. Lectures, in loco*: "Even the bold unpopularity that cares not whom it offends may be, and often is, merely the result of a contentious, warlike spirit, defiant of all around, and proud in a fancied superiority."] This "*free*" Paul can say, "Ourselves your servants,—your bondservants, your *slaves*,—for Jesus' sake"; and that to these very Corinthians (2 Cor. iv. 5). The verbal, surface discrepancy runs down to a very real agreement and unity of conception and feeling beneath. The "*freest*" and most "independent" man is the one who can best concede something, and abridge his liberty "*for the Gospel's sake*" (ver. 23). He may *give up* something of his liberty (say) for peace' sake; but the Church should not ask it; they have no right to demand it. The loving, wise, patient, diligent, faithful minister in the Church will usually get all the honour he can wisely desire, and all the "*freedom*" he can wisely use.

II. Free, looking manward, Paul is yet under most urgent compulsion, looking Christward. (See "*constraineth*," in the Notes on 2 Cor. v. 14.) 1. No worthy heart can look unmoved upon need or misery, and know and possess the remedy; no worthy heart can refuse the "*constraint*" so put upon it. The beggars of the street stand silent, simply exhibiting their sightless eyes, or crippled hands, or mutilated members; they know they need say nothing to move really compassionate hearts; their needs have "poor dumb mouths" which "speak for them"; their very necessity is a plea which the tender-hearted patron will not, cannot, resist. [So may we say that, if in our ignorance or weakness we "cannot pray," if we are brought so low, physically, mentally, spiritually; then if we can only lie helpless before God, exhibiting ourselves in our need, to Him, it will be a most effectual appeal to His heart, a prayer He cannot but hear. He cannot sit upon His throne, and see, and know, and do nothing (Exod. iii. 7, 8).] 2. The man, who is himself saved, and then for the first time, by contrast and by new insight, understands in any real sense what peril and misery it is to be "lost," who is daily walking in the blessedness of "salvation" and of fellowship with God in Christ, cannot selfishly keep locked up within his own bosom the news, the secret, of the new possibilities for sinners through the Gospel. He *must* be an evangelist, telling out the good news; he must be missionary in instinc-

tive impulse, in motive and activity. "*Necessity is laid upon him.*" And no man will ever be of use as a minister of Christ in whose soul this inward, urgent necessity is not continually present. He should jealously watch against the first beginnings of its decline; he should mourn before Christ over its absence; he should guard it as a most precious possession. 3. But Paul lies under the (almost) coercion of a more mighty impulse still. "*Woe is unto him if he preach not.*" (See Separate Homily, ver 16.) The first, original "call to the ministry" is the Master's call. And that call is a "claim" which it were rebellion—sin—to ignore, or refuse, or resist. The Church in its "calling" is only the organ of the Spirit of the Master, and has no power, or function, beyond that of ascertaining, so far as man may, who are the men called by Christ. Above all:

III. This "*free*" Apostle is under willing bondage to the prejudices, the imperfectly enlightened conscience, the liabilities consequent on weakness of principle or character in those whom he approaches. 1. His Divine Master, to save him, "humbled Himself," "emptied Himself," and, Lord of all as He was, "became obedient," the servant of His Father's will, and that even to the length of "*dying*," and that dying a death upon a cross (Phil. ii. 8). His Master had "stuck at nothing," of self-surrender and self-sacrifice, when it was a question of saving him and his fellow-sinners. Nothing was too much to do, to suffer, to give up, if only men might be saved. And Paul is His Master over again in this. The Jew found him ready to concede all that involved no unfaithfulness to Christ, and was not inconsistent with the very meaning and *raison d'être* of the Gospel,—ready to accommodate himself in all really indifferent points to the prejudices of a Jew's education and lifelong habits of feeling and practice. Within the same—happily broad—limits the Gentile, "*without the law*," found this Jew, "born, made, under the law" (Gal. iv. 4), ready to meet him, to lay aside any Jewish habit or practice, which would stand in the way of their getting perfectly into that touch and that sympathetic understanding of each other without which Paul could do nothing to help him; indeed, a Gentile found no more resolute and steadfast champion of Gentile freedom from the Mosaic ritual law than this ex-Pharisee Paul. Paul would walk with shortened steps by the side of the weakest, that he might lead them to his Christ; keeping to their pace "with equal steps," lest, by insisting on their moving onward at his own pace, he should leave them behind, fallen out, unable to follow, to become a prey to the Enemy of souls. Anything of innocent concession, of innocent accommodation, to any man, if by any means he might save him. 2. What a model of method and of aim for a minister! Anybody can drive away or cut off a troublesome, obstinate, stupid, prejudiced member from a Church. The business of a shepherd is to *keep* all his sheep. His aim is to save them,—all. It is too much the inclination of the natural heart to grow impatient with the slow-paced, the mentally sluggish or warped; the men tied hand and foot with what we see to be needless, morbid scrupulosities about trivial points of teaching or practice; too easy to say, "Let them go. We cannot be troubled with such weaklings. We cannot narrow our action, or check our advance in the development of the congregational life, by waiting till these get to see what every man of sense sees already." But the Church and the minister *exist to save* even the "*weak*"; the prejudiced, narrow Jew, the half-instructed, "*lawless*" Gentile. "*If by any means I may save some.*" Even one soul is too precious to be neglected, or left behind, or cast over. 3. No pains are too great to find out how to approach a soul, in order to save it. Sympathy means "feeling *with*." It means laying oneself alongside of the man; projecting ourselves into his position; getting to his standpoint; trying to understand and see what he sees, as if with his eyes; contracting ourselves to his measure, that we may understand his deepest life; endeavouring to make

our heart beat pulse and pulse with his, that then we may understand his difficulties and remove them, and may lead him up and out with us into our higher and larger knowledge and enjoyment and life. [See how Elisha (2 Kings iv. 34) applied himself to the body of the child of the Shunammite, mouth and mouth, eyes and eyes, hands and hands, till his own warm life made the cold body beneath him warm again into readiness for life. How every teacher, even on secular subjects, especially in dealing with the young, finds the urgent necessity of sympathetically understanding the pupil's mind, and entering into his position, if he is to teach, and to give what himself knows.] He who would teach and help and save must begin by serving. 4. The unsympathetic observer cries, "Mr. Pliable!" The honestly narrow Jew says, "What shocking lawlessness! Why, the man makes into matters indifferent some of the most explicit and long-binding laws of Moses! Rank Antinomianism! Rank infidelity!" "No," Paul would reply, "I am not lawless. *I am under law*, [and in a very real sense "*under The Law*"] to my Master, Christ." If principle were touched, or any point which concerned the honour of His Lord, then no one could be more rigidly uncompromising than Paul. Circumcise Titus? When that meant, either that the Christ was *no* Saviour, and that the Circumcision must save, or at least that salvation depended upon Christ *and* Circumcision, Christ being no *complete* Saviour; then, "No, not for an hour!" (Gal. ii. 5). Concede to a Gentile inquirer, or Gentile convert, any liberty in (say) the matter of sexual license? No; such a one "shall God destroy" (1 Cor. iii. 7). Paul is "*free*" again in an instant, and with all the independence of his freedom—he is no man's servant to say "yes" and "no" as his master calls for "yes" and "no"—he speaks his mind. Nay, he is the minister of Christ, and independent, first to be loyal to his Master, and next "*to save, by all means, some*" souls.

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 23—27.

*The Minister's Care for his Own Salvation.*—We see him:

I. **In Conflict.** Then
II. **Crowned.** Or
III. **Castaway.**

I. **In conflict.**—1. Ver. 23 is transitional. A new thought is introduced, out of which this paragraph grows. The preacher of the Gospel hopes to be, needs to be, a "*partaker of the Gospel along with*" those to whom he preaches it. He is himself vitally interested in its truth and its success. He may be an apostle; but he is first a sinner, lost and in bondage, and himself needing to hear the "joyful sound" of release and recovery. The trumpet of Jubilee which he is set to sound, proclaims an "acceptable year of the Lord," in whose happy issues he too hopes to share. He has heard the Gospel, and is rejoicing in its salvation; but if he is to retain his *status*, he must be faithful to his duty as a preacher, set to "save as many souls as he can." If he fail personally, he will be a failure officially; no man will succeed in the ministry who does not keep his personal life right. Conversely, if he fail officially, *through neglect or unfaithfulness*, he will fail personally. His unfaithfulness is sin. (See this and some after points expounded in Separate Homily, "An Apostle's Peril," ver. 27.) 2. *A racer*, putting all his energies into the race; making no play of his ministry, but most serious and arduous and even exhausting labour. *A boxer*, matched with a busy, active, dangerous antagonist in his very "*body*"; finding here again that it is no play to deal with himself. His nature every moment waits to render him secure, and then in his security to gain an advantage over him. Indolence, love of ease and comfort, and even natural weariness, need to be watched, lest they deal deadly blows at

his life. He must be ready to return rebuke for suggestion, blow for blow. ["Get thee behind Me, Satan!" said Christ to Peter, who had revolted against the idea of the shame and the bodily suffering of the cross. "Do not think of such a thing, Lord! That be far from Thee! Be propitious to Thyself (lit. Greek); be kinder to Thyself than that!" Had the Master just passed through conflict in anticipatory presence of the cross? And now, with mistaken kindness, His friend, Peter, makes the very suggestion, which, quite innocently, His own holy *body* may have been making. "Shun the pain!" (Matt. xvi. 22).] There are dangers of the couch, the arm-chair, the hospitable table, the glass, the pipe, the cycle, many (literal) body-dangers besetting, buffeting, the Christian "boxer." [Make the very body come obediently "to heel."] [As there are also dangers in the study,—of *dilettante* reading and work, known to, condemned by, nobody outside; dangers of success; dangers in days of what seems "failure"; dangers of the infection of the "secular" temper—for the minister may do his work in as thoroughly "secular" a spirit as any business man in the market or the shop.] 3. He is in *constant training* for his running. He must never suffer himself to get "out of condition." Things allowable if he were not running a race, or if he were not in the ministry, and bound to "fulfil it" [Col. iv. 17; cf. the R.V. in Rev. iii. 2: "*No works* of thine *fulfilled* before God; many things purposed, begun, half done, nearly finished, but "not fulfilled"], are not permissible to him. He must keep himself free, pure, not entangled nor self-ensnared, in the best order of body, mind, heart, to do his work and accomplish his "*course.*" ["*Temperate in all things.*" See Separate Homily.]

II. **Crowned.**—[Rev. iii. 11 is a warning to an official life that its *official* "*crown*" may be given over to, passed on to, worn by, some other who has done more faithfully and effectually work which was allotted to the uncrowned man. Rev. ii. 10 is the personal reward of the personal life. And notice] the "*crown*" of a successful, faithful life is "*Life.*" "Uncorruptness" in teaching (Tit. ii. 7, where notice the displaced reading, which was significant in its reiteration of idea), and in that love (Eph. vi. 24) which is the very element of the Christian walk, thus leads up to "life and incorruption" (2 Tim. i. 10). The purifying of the nature from all that belongs to "death" at last made complete; the life which sprang here from "incorruptible seed" at last developed into eternal, indefectible perfection of all its features and capacities; whatever of added happiness "Heaven" may include,—happiness *ab extra*, dependent upon surroundings, companionships, appointed employments; all this in perfection, with nothing of transitoriness to dim, even as a possibility, the enjoyment of the present; with no remotest possibility of an end, to cloud over as with the gradual closing in of an eternal Night, the Divine glory of the eternal Day of that world's life;—this "Life" is Paul's "*crown.*" The spiritual life here was all the work of Christ in the soul; and to His heart also that after-life which is the expansion, the fulness, the sequel as well as the successor of this, is the crown of this. **Finis coronat opus Christi, et Pauli.** [What crown is there of all for which men in the "natural" realm "strive for the mastery," which is incorruptible? *E.g.* how much of the knowledge acquired by a lifetime of study and self-denying, enslaving labour is merely relative! It is modified, supplemented, made obsolete, almost before the man who won it and wore it is cold in his grave. Or, how distance of time dwindles and "*corrupts*" away the mere crown of fame and honour given by contemporaries, and not unworthily, to the majority of the famous people of any one century or nation! How unsatisfying the best reward of mere secular labours! How many a hot-browed athlete has found his crown begin to wither and perish almost as soon as it has been placed upon his head!] Or, unhappy alternative:

III. **Castaway.**—(See, again, below.) Of all the "lost," is the rejection of any

man more pathetically painful to imagine than that of the preacher, who has set others to run, who has directed their training and their running, who has enheartened them in their days of faintness or discouragement, who has seen them take the one last step which bears them in death over the line that marks the goal attained; and then himself presents himself to the Judge for "*approval*" and for crowning, only to be thrust away "*reprobate*," "*castaway*"?

## *SEPARATE HOMILIES.*

Ver. 10. *Hope cheering Labour.*—[The verse may be made the occasion of a sermon on the Rewards of Labour and the Returns of Capital.]

1. *Diversity of contributors to the ultimate harvest.*—Some "*plough*," do the preliminary, rough, necessary toil, in manufacturing processes, in all engineering and mechanical trades, in commerce and trade; the "ploughmen" may stand for the *unskilled labourers.* Some "*thresh*," and bring to finished readiness for the consumers' use all the product of a succession of workers and of the chemistry of nature [*i.e.* of God in His laboratory within the soil, where the seed is buried and dies, to live again]. The "threshers" may stand for the *capitalist*, or any (supposed) higher-grade contributors to the final result. *Many must co-operate;* each beginning upon the basis of the work of another order of workers; and at some point in the chain of production, the blessing and work of God coming in indispensably; *if the hungry world is to have its "bread."*

2. *There is interdependence of producers.*—The ploughman's work is a necessary preliminary to that of the thresher. The thresher completes the otherwise unfruitful work of the ploughman. Each man is needed. The much-abused "middleman" has arisen out of a need; his work, however selfishly or extortionately or tyrannically it has been used, is in itself only an instance of division of labour, necessitated by the complexity of modern life and business. The man who is not wanted, who does not justify his own place and support, will not long be supported. But the ploughman must not grudge the reward of the thresher, nor must the thresher forget what he owes to the ploughman. And *must not forget to give it to him*, either.

3. No man should labour, whether ploughman or thresher, without a fair reward for his labour, or without hope of being partaker of the fruits of his toil. The right apportionment of the profits, the fruits, of labour is a growingly difficult problem, [and one on which Christian men may honestly differ as to guiding principles and results; not to be discussed in a neutral Commentary like this]. Labour may be as thoroughly selfish and tyrannical in the matter, as it charges Capital with being. Some of the complexity, the perplexity, of the problem is removed whenever on either side an honest, earnest, sympathetic, painstaking endeavour is made to appreciate the view and the demand of the other. Each side also would need to cease to insist upon absolute, mechanical, *doctrinaire*, "right." [In this *noblesse oblige*; whether it be the *noblesse* of "superior" station, or of better education and wider views of the complex problem; or of greater ability, financial or other, to go back from the full limit of "rights"; above all, if it be the *noblesse* of the Christian profession and character. *Noblesse* should lead the way in concession to prejudice, in patience with ignorance. The Christian spirit should be foremost in softening the rigour of the mere mechanical "political economics," with their formulation of self-interest working against self-interest.] Logic, "wages," are not the last words of discussions in times of strained relations and class-conflict. The heart is often illogical, and traverses all theories and formulas; but it rules. The heart

understands, if the thresher gets close to the ploughman, and the ploughman tries to understand the thresher. Labour without hope of properly proportioned "*partaking*," is the labour of slaves. Such labour, without hope to cheer weariness, to incite to effort, to reward diligence and real work, begets the slavish temper—sullen, rebellious, dangerous. There should be no rigidly mechanical adherence to "rights" on either side; so much time, to a half-minute; so much labour, to a single hand's-turn; so much wages, to a half-farthing. Brotherliness should "rub down" the hard lines of such a plan of the relations between man and man. [The "lord" in the Saviour's story who said, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?" is nevertheless a master who gave to some a whole day's "penny" for one hour's labour.] To say, "There is no friendship and no religion in business," is not to utter Gospel, Christian, economics. Let capital leave the door of hope open for the labourer; let not the labourer grudge or make impossible the hope of the employer. All the political economies must adjust themselves according to this fixed, divinely sanctioned principle. [Wherever God is the Employer, He will see to it that His ploughman or thresher *does* realise the "*hope*" in which he laboured.]

Ver. 12. Note *three important things* as assumed here.

I. **Men may hinder the Gospel.**—The end of human history is, no doubt, a victory for God and for Goodness, for Christ and His Gospel, and, along with this, a vindication of all the perplexing facts connected with God's method in leading on the course of history to the goal. Yet one aspect of the ever-present problem of Evil is that the rate and extent of the progress of the Gospel is made dependent upon man's faithfulness and activity. There have seemed ages of the Church when the Church did nothing to extend, and hardly seemed to keep, the ground previously won for Christianity. No soul will ever be lost, *simply and only because* a Church or an individual Christian was inconsistent, a stumbling-block, or in apathetic worldliness did not do its duty to that soul. Yet are there none lost who might have been saved if the Church or the Christian had been faithful? What a power, to be able to narrow, or to divert from those dying for it, the river of the water of life—to make the wheels of Christ's chariot drive heavily, plunged in the sand or the bog of a Church's indolence or unspirituality or unbelief! [The unbelief of the *healthy* people in Nazareth prevented Jesus doing all He desired for the need of the *sick* in Nazareth. How one man, Achan, and he no chief or prince, but only a common man, could hold all Israel in check, and really slay the six-and-thirty Israelites who lay dead in the valley before Ai! Perhaps, on the other hand, 2 Pet. iii. 12 may mean "*hastening* the day of God."] [Illustrate thus: Holland is a country for the most part lying below the level of the sea; it would naturally be covered by the waters. But with long years of patient, watchful industry the inhabitants have built and kept up, around their coasts and along their canals, huge dykes, and these, with a system of gates and locks, keep out the waters. All this is the salvation of Holland. But unbelief can build its walls and barriers around itself, and around a Church, and shut out the tide of blessing which God desires to send upon the "thirsty ground."]

II. **Even good men may be in danger of hindering the Gospel.**—If, *e.g.*, Paul had insisted too stubbornly on his right to be maintained by the Church, or lawfully to enjoy the company of a wife and the comforts of domestic happiness at the cost of the Church.

III. **To hinder the Gospel is so great an evil** that to avoid it, or even the danger of it, is worth any sacrifice, except of principle; to help forward the Gospel is worth any cost. Everything which will arouse conflict and bad

feeling, everything which may, even incidentally and unjustifiably, cause offence, everything which is found to "give place" to the ever-watchful Adversary, and so to put the brake on to the wheels of progress, the Christian man will forego, "*lest he hinder*," etc. He will give up his liberty in the matter of amusements, or recreation, lest though remotely he check the work of the Gospel in even one soul; above all, lest he should cripple his own usefulness, or dull the edge of his own spirituality, and so "*hinder*," etc. If the work of God seems to lag, to drag, to be hindered, then Churches and individuals should begin anxiously, and with unsparing fidelity, to inquire the cause. [See the inquiry when Achan's sin blocked the way of Israel's conquest. No use for Joshua to be humbled on the ground in prayer: "Get up! Search out the sin!" (Josh. vii. 10). The saying of the disciples at the supper-table: "Is it I? Is it I?" was better than their earlier saying, "Who is it?"]

Ver. 12. *The Gospel hindered.*

**I. The progress of the Gospel in the world seems, and surely is, slower than the purpose of God, the desire of Christ, the aim of the Spirit's work, would lead us to expect.**—Faithful hearts yearn for greater, wider, more rapid and sweeping conquests than are actually won. They cannot acquiesce in the actual condition of the matter; they cannot adjust their hope, or activity, to the actual rate of progress. They have a heart, an instinct, within them, which rebels against any such acquiescence and adjustment. They ask, "Why is it? What doth hinder?" The man who is content that the Church—or his own particular, sectional or local Church—should do no more than work on the programme, "As last year,—only more so!" has lost one of the first, simplest tokens of being "in Christ," and therefore of being in the communion of sympathy with his Lord.

**II. Replies which are not answers.**—1 "It is of no use to fret or be anxious. God is sovereign; things are going as He wills, and as fast as He just now wills they should." The spirit of the reply of a Baptist pastor to the offer of Carey for India. Not often heard now; yet, if not explicitly taught, it is implicitly embodied in the practice of the Church. There is, always has been, a sovereignty in the measure and time of the outpouring of the Spirit. The Church has actually progressed spasmodically, by Revivals after times of inertia or unfaithfulness; and these have not always seemed given in response to a specially pleading Church. They have sometimes come upon a sleeping Church. Yet, whilst the Church says to God, "Awake, awake," He says in reply to the Church, "Awake, awake." (See Dr. Maclaren, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 19 *sqq.*, Isa. lxii. 1, 6, 7.) God is covenanted to hear, and to give, and to bless the world and the work of the Church, whenever the conditions are fulfilled by It. At all events, sovereignty or no sovereignty, He is in fact waiting, eager, forward, to give the success which seems hindered. We may count upon Him. 2. The seeming failures cannot mean that the Gospel has found a soil, a race, a heart, for which it has no message, or to whose needs it has no adaptation. That were to charge Him Who has made both heart and Gospel with something less than the perfection of Divine wisdom. History and age-long experiment give no support to such a supposition. On the contrary, the Gospel has conquered, saved, satisfied, sample cases in every land, century, race, temperament, social grade, mental cast, young, old, ignorant, learned, etc. 3. Nor that it has found a race or a heart which does not need it. No other religion as yet has so satisfied and possessed its votaries as that some—sample cases again—have not found a longing for something else, and better, which the Christian faith has supplied. If not before, in the very presentation of this supply the heart learns to know its need. 4. "But the superstitions are so inveterate, the habits of a life-

time so hopelessly deep-rooted, the depravity and degradation of heart and conscience and life are such in the the adults, that we must let them go—leaving them to God—and depend upon the young, the coming generation." But Paul's Gospel won its triumphs amongst adults, and from inveterate, degraded, deeply depraved heathenism. His Gospel solved the same problems which we face to-day at home or in foreign lands. The Gospel is meant, not only for those who need it, but for those also who need it most. 5. "The Gospel is only to be preached for a *testimony* to all nations; the actual inbringing of the nations on any wide scale must come with the Thousand Years." [A large question. Matt. xxiv. 14 is appealed to. To many this reply seems like invoking something to supply a lacking effectiveness in the Gospel; like calling upon Christ to come and do what the Spirit and Word of God have failed in accomplishing.] 6. "We want more money, more organisations, a new Society, or Committee, for this or that." All good; all needed, perhaps. But the Gospel won its first triumphs, and has often triumphed since, with few or none of these helps. Evidently, historically, these are not all, or *the* essentials. [*One-man power, consecrated*, is better than all Committees and organisations, though most productive when working under control and with organisation. Money must be made no substitute for the Spirit of God.]

II. [As above, "**Men may hinder the Gospel.**"] Generally, *want* **of the power of the Holy Ghost** is underneath all slow progress. He does what *is* done, much or little. He would do more, if the conditions on which He co-operates with His Church were better fulfilled by it. [As with Christ at Nazareth, above.] A spiritually low condition of His Church, showing itself in little prayer for the progress of the Gospel, in lack of the spirit of consecration, and issuing in the withholding for self of money, time, family, or anything else needed to the progress and extension of the work, is *the* great hindrance; it "grieves the Spirit." Little appreciation of the Gospel at home; therefore little zeal for its propagation, no real faith in, or concern about, its saving power and success; are sometimes "*hindrances.*" Of secondary importance, but yet real causes, may be, defective representations of the Gospel in the preaching, or in the life of individuals and Churches; it may be overlaid with ritual, or hidden beneath intellectual speculation; it may be made too much a question of philanthropic benefit rather than of redemptive purpose; may now and then be proclaimed in a shape too specially that of a Church or nation. [*E.g.* must not expect some English modes of working and effort to suit equally well France, or India, or China; only an encumbrance to progress to attempt to transplant methods or some peculiar ecclesiastical constitution into another type of nation and life.]—*Suggested in part by remarks in "Homilist,"* v., vi.

Ver. 21. *The Principle of Law under the Gospel Order.*

I. "**Under law**" **or** "**under the Law,**" **which?**—(For a lexical decision, see extract from Cremer in Critical Notes.) A "burning question" to the Hebrew Christian community, the members of which stood, historically and personally, on the line of the "meeting-place of the ages" (Heb. ix. 26). The fire of that day is for all practical purposes extinct in ours. [The council of Acts xv. met on account of this difficulty of practical action. The conflict of Paul's middle life with the Judaisers shows the urgency then of a decision.] We, standing clear of the temporary controversy, can see that the Law of God is one and continuous through all the dispensations, and as truly extant and binding outside Judaism as within it. If God once speak, His word is man's law. By His expressed will every man, of every age and race, is bound to shape his life. For a special purpose,

arising out of local and national emergency, "The Law" was a thing interjected [between Abraham and Christ], a remarkable historical incident and episode in God's whole government and ordering of the religious history of the world, and particularly of the covenant people, one in Abraham and Christ. [Two passages are the key to this: Gal. iii. 19; Rom. v. 20.] But it was only a passing, temporary embodiment of permanent principles. Even the Decalogue has local *colouring* in four of its enactments. Part of God's expressed will toward mankind is His judgment of and against sin, and the plan on which alone He will be approached by a sinner. These had a local, temporary expression given to them in the ritual law, with its defilements and purifications, and with its sacrifices of atonement, of consecration, of fellowship [sin, burnt, peace offerings respectively]. Detached from [do not say "purified" from] the temporary, national, theocratic accompaniment; stripped of the dispensational, and (*e.g.* ver. 9) very temporary enswathement; all local, Jewish colour washed out; the "*law*" in "*The Law*" has come forward into Christianity, which is the newer, world-wide, race-suiting form of the one continuous government of the world by the God of Redemption. Every *principle* of man's relation to God, or to man, which can be proved to underlie the enactments —even the "trivial ones"—of the Mosaic code and ritual, is in full validity under Christianity. "*God is one*" (Gal. iii. 19) in all the dispensations, and His law is one. The Christian is, *e.g.*, "*under the law*" about "not muzzling the ox," "*unto Christ*," as a matter of loyal obedience to God in Christ. The "*law*" *in* "*the Law*" of the Passover is still a fully valid part of the Christian scheme (1 Cor. v. 8). "The eternal morals of the old economy are rewritten in the pages of the New Testament, as the standard of requirement, the condition of the charter of privileges, and a testimony against those who offend" (Pope, *Theol.*, iii. 173).

**II. The Gospel still employs the principle of a law external to the man.** —No doubt an ideal Christian "perfection" requires no code. All the old statute-book is consolidated and codified into one law, "*Love.*" All obedience lies in germ in the service of Love. A perfectly instructed Love would enact, from instance to instance, a perfect law *for the individual.* On the basis of the grace of the Gospel, the man whose *status* before God is that of a sinner accepted for the sake of, and in, Christ, finds the law and the obedience prescribed and secured by even an imperfectly instructed Love, accepted by God. Love is the ideally sufficient motive and force for all obedience. Ideally the life springing from a perfect and perfectly instructed Love coincides with the whole requirement of a perfect Law. The external code says no more, asks no more, than Love teaches and enacts and secures. Very glorious approximation to all this is the privilege of all in Christ, and very glorious embodiments of the possibility and privilege are found in every Church, in every century. But "no code, no law, but that of love," can only be acted upon *sim pliciter* as between one soul and its God, alone together. God's law and His government need not only adapting to an individual case, but to men in associated life. The enlightenment of conscience and of love varies as between individual and individual, and between stage and stage of the spiritual growth of the same man. A merely subjective law would be one of continually varying interpretation, and of often mistaken interpretation. Even the greatly advanced Christian man is often in need of an external, objective, absolute, standard. His newborn instinct of love will often be the best, or only, expositor *to himself* of the external commandment; but, on the other hand, he will often need this to interpret and correct the dim, or hesitant, or biassed verdict or direction given by Love within. "The best Christians need a remembrancer: they

obey the law within, but are not always independent of the teaching of the law without." The law without is the safeguard, and the trainer, and the instructor, of the instinct of obedience within. [So an inborn taste for music, or drawing, or poetry, needs the discipline, and the check, and the help of a constant reference to the best models. A Mozart makes laws in music for others, not without first giving a thorough study and obedience to the laws of his predecessors.] And much more does the man who has not yet even the new directing principle of the new, and specifically Christian, life within him, need the external law. It is the straight-edge which convicts of sad irregularity the best line traced by his life. [Kingsley, *At Last*, chap. i., says all this well, with special reference to the Fourth Commandment: "It would be wiser to consider whether the first step in religious training must not be obedience to some such external positive law; whether the savage must not be taught that there are certain things he ought not to do, by being taught that there is one day at least on which he shall not do them. How else is man to learn that the laws of Right and Wrong, like the laws of the physical world, are entirely independent of him, his likes or dislikes, knowledge or ignorance of them; that by Law he is environed from his cradle to his grave, and that it is at his own peril that he disobeys the Law? A higher religion may, and ought to, follow; one in which the Law becomes a Law of Liberty, and a Gospel, because it is loved and obeyed for its own sake; but even he who has attained to this must be reminded again and again, alas! that the Law which he loves does not depend for its sanction upon his love of it, on his passing fancies and feelings; but is as awfully independent of him as it is of the veriest heathen. . . ." And the supreme Lawgiver is not even the tenderest and most enlightened Conscience, but Christ. Indeed, the tenderness and the enlightenment are all His grace at work. His own Pattern is the one absolute all-comprising standard of human life in its perfectness. His teachings—and not least those embodied in His acts—are abiding Law for His people. All the express directions of the Epistles are the legislation of Christ for "the kingdom of heaven," given by the Inspiring Spirit through the Apostolic writers. The Inner Light needs interpreting by, whilst in turn it flashes its own illuminative interpretation upon, the Word without. Under the Gospel Love fulfils the Law, —in principle, perfectly, from the first, —but it needs the support, the defence of itself against its own weakness or ignorance, the education, of an external standard and Law. Gospel Ethics ought to be the noblest and most perfect in practical embodiment, as the result of this co-operation of the internal and the external methods of regulation of a Christian life.

III. **The text holds the safe middle between two extremes found practically perilous.** — A sentence of "Rabbi" Duncan (*Colloquia Perip.*, 109) thus states them: "Ethics without law is as bad in theology as law without ethics." (He has some pregnant sentences *re* the former peril (pp. 42-44).] In the one direction tends [or from that quarter comes] all theology which minimises the *expiatory*, *reconciling*, *atoning* element in the death of Christ; which eviscerates the force of the phrases, "forgiveness of sins," or "the wrath of God," or which practically leaves out of its scheme any true "anger" in Him; which makes the death only the culminating point of the example, or of the appeal of the love of God to the alienated heart of man. In the revolt from (say) the hard, formal "governmental expedient" theory, and of the "compact" scheme between an angry Father and a loving Son; in the desire to find in theology a worthier and truer place and expression for the love of God toward even those who are alienated from Him and from goodness; there would seem a real danger lest due recognition should not be given to the universal

sense of *guilt*, nor to the way in which even the crudest and least carefully stated formulations of the principle of "satisfaction to Divine justice" have always met and satisfied the demands of the awakened heart and conscience. And this means a defective recognition of the element of *law* in the relations of God in Christ towards redeemed man. The liability is towards a pattern of life marked by a sentimental goodness rather than Sanctification, and towards a view of Sin which makes it only the fall of the weak child who has not yet learned to walk; or ignorance which misunderstands God; or the limitation of the finite creature. [Teachers and taught, needless to say, are nearly always better, and their lives nobler, than their theory.]

The other peril is *Antinomianism*, "*the* Heresy of the Christian Church," the peril of all communities; the shame of all Churches, and creeds, and confessions. It may be the coarse type of Gal. v. 13, or Rom. vi. 1, which took advantage of the freeness with which pardon may be, even repeatedly, sought and found through Christ, and which dared to live in sin, even gross and sensual sin, presuming on the abounding grace of God. More often—though constantly tending to this uttermost practical licence—it has based itself upon theologies which stated unguardedly such truths as "dead to the law through the body of Christ" (Rom. vii. 4), "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness," etc. (Rom. x. 4), "Ye are not under law, but under grace" (Gal. v. 18); theologies of "imputation of the righteousness of Christ to the believer." ["Putting a surplice over a sweep, without first washing him," was hardly a caricature of some extreme forms of this.] The "Antinomian" regards the requirement of perfect holiness as so fully met by Christ that he needs not measure his conduct by any law. Obedience is to him expedient, proper, perhaps rewardable; disobedience may be chastened by a Father, not eternally punished by a Judge. Obedience is to him not a condition of acceptance as to the past or negative salvation, neither is it a condition of acceptance as to the future or positive salvation. But the whole and balanced Gospel knows of no salvation which does not mean holiness of heart and life. It knows of no faith which does not work by love, in all its practical exhibition towards God and man. [The old Jewish desire of a "glorious kingdom of God" for all Israelites, apart from any question of their personal character, reappears in the tendency of every heart to desire heaven, without the trouble of holiness; to make Christ and His cross a convenient help from a deathbed into heaven, although the life may have been spent over self, the world, or in plain sin.] The most conspicuous honour ever done to the supremacy of moral law was seen where Christ hung upon the cross of Calvary. Law is so sacred a thing, Sin that violates it is so terrible a thing, that He who is no sinner, but only the representative of the race of sinners, died, not merely an example, but a "*curse*," under "*the curse of the law*."] [It were strange, if in days when "*law*" is more completely than ever seen to hold in its grip Creation and God's order in it, the New Creation should not be thought to run on analogous lines. There is no possibility of trifling with natural law with impunity. In the moral world we should expect it to be as certain that punishment must light—the curse must "come to roost"—somewhere, where law has been broken.]

Ver. 16. "*Woe . . . if I preach not the Gospel.*"—Do not think the ministry "an honourable profession" for your sons before whom nothing else seems definitely to open, or for yourself—perhaps not exactly successful at anything else; "good pay, good social *status*, not too much work." Think of its responsibility; you understand in business what it is to pay for responsibility as well as for ability in employés: for how much pay will a

man undertake to answer for immortal souls?

I. **A great task—"to preach the Gospel."**—*Not* to be *too narrowly conceived* and interpreted. [Even John Wesley complains (*Works*, xii. 130): "Of all preaching, what is usually called Gospel preaching is the most useless, if not the most mischievous: A dull, yea, or lively, harangue, on the sufferings of Christ, or salvation by faith, without strongly inculcating holiness. I see, more and more, that this naturally tends to drive holiness out of the world."] 1. A *complete* Gospel should be preached. (1) The sanctions of the Law of God, the threatenings of the Word of God, are an integral part of the Gospel. [No teacher speaks, *e.g.*, of "fire" so often or so explicitly as Christ.] It is "good news" to know the dangers of disobedience or neglect, as certainly as to know the possibilities of forgiveness and of help toward obedience. A complete human nature includes *fear*. The whole message of God to men does not disregard this motive. Men need awakening, as well as directing to Christ. "Mere promise-mongers are no Gospel ministers" (Wesley). (2) The *Ethics* of the Gospel should be preached. To preach a crude, hard, unguarded "Election" led to Antinomianism ("What does it matter how we live, if we are elect?"). So to preach an unguarded "free grace" leads to Antinomianism ("Let us continue in sin; grace will abound; pardon may always be had!"). "The Gospel" is *good living* as well as *good news*. St. James's teaching is as really a part of God's whole revealed will as is St. Paul's. Holiness on earth, as well as heaven after earth, is contemplated by the Gospel. It knows of no peace which is not connected with righteousness. "We are created in Christ Jesus *unto* good works" (Eph. ii. 10). [For a young tradesman to go on year by year contentedly losing money, because his kind, wealthy father year by year clears off his balance for him, "is not business." So for a "Christian" to be less careful about falling into sin because the forgiving mercy of God is so free, and so constantly cancels "the debt," "is not Gospel." 2. Yet the Ethics should be *Gospel* ethics, distinctively. Christian morals all converge upon Christ. Love to Him is the summary of all motive, the one master-impulse. What He would have done, or been, in our circumstances is often a compendious, but sufficient, rule of action and standard of character. He is Himself the Mercy and the Morality of the Gospel, embodied. Natural systems of morals appeal to the sinner's own force of character, to his own strength of will, to his self-respect, his self-interest, to some recuperative force within the man himself. In Sin they see only failure because of inexperience or weakness; or the finite, because of its limitations, missing, coming short of ideal obedience; they know nothing of guilt, guilty shame, guilty fears. The motives and the power of obedience, of moral elevation, of growth, are all posited within the man, and are his own. Gospel Morals transfer the centre to God. The whole power is that of the Holy Spirit; man cannot raise himself, or obey of himself. All moral power is grace, a gift, is *ab extra*, and gratuitous mercy for Christ's sake. [Every topic of the "Gospel preacher" should be exhibited in its close, direct relation to Christ and to God's purpose in Christ.] 3. Thus treated—*exhibited in relation to Christ*—*every style* of preaching, the utterance of *every cast of mind*, *may be* made really "*preaching of the Gospel.*" The preacher of doctrine, dogma, theology, may be of course only an utterer of theses, mere scientific, professional prelections or disquisitions on Scripture topics; but he may be as really a Gospel preacher—laying the foundation of correct, clear thought, and of intelligent experience, in his hearers—as the fervent evangelist, full of illustration, poetry, wit, pathos,

and appealing mainly to the emotions. Theology is the Science underlying the preacher's Art. The Old Testament may yield up Gospel teaching to a student as really, if not as clearly, as the New. Some men will preach from the Proverbs; others from St. John's writings. But no style of talent, no method of treating Scripture topics, no special class of topic, must be narrowly excluded as not compatible with "preaching the Gospel."

II. **No matter of self-glorification to or by the preacher.**—1. As Christ is central in the matter of the Gospel, so He must be in the preacher's manner and thought about, and during, and after, his work. Christ must be to the front, the preacher hidden behind Him. Attention must be made to centre upon the theme, not upon the speaker. ["He shall glorify Me" (John xvi. 14; but *not* "*of* Himself," ver. 13; quite another thought). The Holy Spirit is the model preacher of Christ and His Gospel. How, in vers. 9-11, all His "convincing" work moves toward and centres in Christ!] 2. All success is traced up to His power, and must be laid at His feet. [1 Cor. ii. 5; Phil. ii. 17, a *believing* people is brought by Paul and laid upon the altar before Christ, and then his own life is poured out as a libation over the offering.] 3. The preacher is not the discoverer of the Gospel he preaches. It is no credit to him to have such a message to deliver. He can claim none of the deserved plaudits which greet and reward a scientific discoverer or a successful inventor on announcing his new thing. He is barely, only, a reporter. "Ye shall be *witnesses*—no more—unto Me" (Acts i. 8). 4. He is himself only a sinner whom the Gospel has saved. His whole *status* before God rests, and will eternally rest, upon God's mercy to him for the sake of another—Christ. It is an honour which is mercy, as well as responsibility, that he is "put in trust with the Gospel" (1 Thess. ii. 4). He is only the "earthen vessel"—the crock of common pottery—that holds the golden treasure (2 Cor. iv. 7). An ambassador who was once an enemy, sent to his fellow-rebels. Not a source, but a channel, for the water of life. The honour of his office is not personal, but is reflected from his King. 5. He is unworthy to fulfil such an honourable function; he is, in himself, quite unable to fulfil it aright, or worthily of its tremendous issues. 6. Do not praise the preacher, or congratulate him on his success. His zeal, his skill, his success, are all from the outside, from Christ. Above all:

III. **He has no choice; he dare not but preach.**—[Yet this is constraint, not compulsion. Like Jonah or Balaam, men may refuse the commission of God, or only half discharge it; and must take the "*woe*" which is the consequence. The model of the spirit of the preacher, called to be the servant of Christ in this work, is, in its culminating example (cf. Ps. xl. 6-8, not merely "targumed," but authoritatively applied to, and expounded of, Christ, Heb. x. 5-7), Christ Himself, in His voluntary, self-devoting (John xvii. 19, "I sanctify Myself") acceptance of the call.] He feels the compulsion of (*a*) gratitude; (*b*) compassion for men's need, and consideration of their danger (perhaps, here, "knowing the *terror* of the Lord," 2 Cor. v. 11; but this not certain); (*c*) a sense of right; he ought to tell what has been such a blessing to himself; (*d*) above all, and this here, **he dares do nothing else.** "Free" as regards man's power and payment (ver. 1), but bound as to God's call. [An old missionary, in his journal (*penes me*), speaking of his "call" to the ministry, writes: "When I am at my best religiously, the impression is the most powerful and persistent. The everlasting salvation of my soul is intimately, if not inseparably, connected with my obedience in this respect."] No question whether he shall "choose the ministry." He is "called" to it. God designed him for it "from his mother's womb." Pity the man who gets into the work without this call

and commission, and who finds it out in later life, when perhaps too late to retrace his steps and undo the past. But "*woe*" to the man who, being called, will not hear; who ought to preach the Gospel, but who chooses some easier, or more lucrative, or more congenial, line of life! What sin is there like it, to refuse the honour of being an ambassador who may save souls? [Yet how patient God is with reluctant Moses, who is almost petulant and rebellious in his urgent protest against going to Egypt (Exod. iii. 11, 13, iv. 1, 10), excuse after excuse, until finally, ver. 13, "Here am I, but do not send *me*; choose, and send somebody else."] Do not *envy* the "preacher of the Gospel," even if he be very successful. "Brethren, *pray* for us."

Vers. 24-27. "*Temperate in all things.*"—(May be made the basis of a *Temperance Sermon.*)

I. **Christian religion honours the body.**—Only one that really does. Such religion as Corinthians knew took no account of it; bodily sins and lusts were reckoned things indifferent. 1. Some to-day make almost a religion of bodily exercise. Athletics the god which gets their best devotion. Read nothing else in the paper; can talk on no other topics. That an exaggeration. [Body not everything. Some giants very poor creatures in mind. Dwarfs have done great things. Two most wonderful figures in Europe at end of seventeenth century were two commanders of large armies: William III., an "asthmatic skeleton"; Luxembourg, "the princely hunchback" (Macaulay).] 2. As real an exaggeration to make *teetotalism* the only devotion, the only religion, the only remedy for human ill. [Easy to understand the "intemperance of temperance people"; not difficult to excuse, or even justify, it. Man who sees most of the wide extent, and dire results, of intemperance; lives in midst of its woe and wreck; finds all efforts, hopes, prayers, defeated by it; finds the thick moral induration of the drunkard-habit turn edge of keenest sword, or most pointed arrow; finds the work of years of painful recovery blighted by outburst of old, mad passion again; may be excused if he feel or speak with "undue" strength. May be forgiven his "madness" when he sees wife, child, friend, minister, dragged down to the slough of the sin and shame of drunkard-life. No doubt, too, if we could make drunken England into part of sober England, we should cut tap-root of nine-tenths of English ills, and solve many a social and economic problem. No doubt total abstinence the only remedy for large percentage of misery and sin; the most practical remedy, *as things are to-day.* Yet it is exaggeration.] It is not all. Some appeals to the intemperate are only less liable to become mischievous than drink itself. *E.g.* appeal too strongly to the saving of money effected; may cast out devil of drink by putting in covetousness. Appeal too exclusively to self-respect or strength of will; may make reclaimed drunkard a Pharisee in pride of self. May sometimes only have cured physical mischief by inoculating with moral poison—*Be temperate even in your remedy for intemperance.* True way of regarding question is to make it part of the Christian honour of the body, as an instrument through which Christ is to be served. Highest purpose of education is to make mind a fit instrument for serving Christ. And so too the body is *His*; *He* bought it; bought *all* of the man—body and soul. It is to be kept in best possible order for Him, and His use. Therefore, *in mind and body,—temperate in all things.*

II. **What is temperance?**—1. See driver of ancient chariot, or modern four-in-hand; his strong bit; still more, his firm, skilled hand. That perfect control of his team is temperance. Man, boy, drives team of three bodily appetites; mettlesome horses, powerful, sometimes turbulent, in their strength; but they have their work to do. Temperance is having the team well in hand, making them do their work, but *no*

*more*; do it, *at the man's will*; or *leave it alone*, at his will. Horses must not be allowed to run away with chariot, with man. "Be temperate, lest team carry you over the precipice of ruin here and hereafter." 2. See chorus on the orchestra, how built up of four classes, masses, of voice. Conductor makes each do its part, but no more. Too much bass, too much treble, equally spoil the music. If tenors (or even one voice) over-assert themselves, they spoil balance and harmony. Conductor makes each do its part, loud, soft, everything, *as he will*. Mind, body, pleasure, work, intellect, heart, will,—in the perfect harmony of Life, all take their part; no more, no less; nothing dwarfed or stunted; nothing exaggerated or over-grown. Be the conductor in full authority over your choir of gifts, powers, passions; make all temper to a happy balance and wholeness. Drunkard lets one voice outshout the rest and ruin the music of the life. 3. *Intemperance* means not having oneself perfectly in hand, having *something a man cannot say "no" to*. ["Never so let yourself go that you cannot 'pull up' at will. Find cannot say 'no' *easily*? Then put foot down, say 'no' absolutely. Body wants to be master? Give it a buffet under the eye—that is Paul's word—to *keep it under*. Make it know you will be master, the grace of God helping you. Body and mind are partners in business of life; neither is a sleeping partner; but not equal partners; body has some stake in concern, but must not have the management, especially in drinking. Mind—you—must be master. That is temperance."] "*In all things.*" Rule for ancient athletes, and for Christians now, for everybody who wants even to win the prizes of life. Nothing really worthy in being a teetotaler, and yet an impure man; a hard worker, yet intemperate in relaxation after hard work. Not too much reading, music, sleep, anything. Every single thing in measure, all in balance.

III. **In many things**—*not drinking only*—**this may mean total abstinence.** As to drinking: 1. For every drunkard, or man or woman in danger, a *necessity*. Such must abstain, or they cannot be Christ's. 2. For Christians it may become *expedient* (see Homily on viii. 9-13). In England, in last century, may not have been. May not be on Continent to-day. Are things, however, coming, or are they come, to such a pass in England, that Christian people must stand clear of what is cursing England as never before? 3. For young people, *safety*. No guarantee "worth a rush" except conversion; even that sometimes overborne No strength but God's in them absolutely to be trusted; but total abstinence a safeguard.

IV. **If not, will not win the prize.**—Happily public opinion is beginning to say intemperate people (in every sense) shall not. Also inevitable working of "natural law" forbids. Boys and men handicap themselves physically by any exaggerated or sinful excess. Success even in business means clear head, sober hand, healthy body. Highest work demands body and mind at their best. So Christ's work demands it. Also if some intemperate men seem to "win," they lose themselves and are cast away (cf. Luke ix. 25; 1 Cor. ix. 27). [Our forefathers bore with intemperate Pitt, and too-convivial Scott, and the sinner Nelson. But, a little later, they would not give Byron his place in Westminster Abbey. To-day not all the witchery of their Shelley or our Swinburne must permit them to take first rank in our national devotion. Day coming when Christianised society will refuse, and say that neither an intemperate man nor an impure man shall lead the national life: "*We* won't have it!"]

Ver. 26. *Christian Progress.*—Compare the progress suggested by (*a*) Running with that suggested by (*b*) Growth. Four Contrasts.

I. (*a*) *Progress, in the outward aspects of it:* the life of action and of conflict, of speech, of work.—*Every*

*detail* of life a *step* forward towards the goal or backward towards the starting-point, or out of the prescribed course altogether. (*b*) Progress *in the inner life*; in strength of character and of principle, greater simplicity and directness of motive; greater abundance in the fruits of grace, in loveliness and Christ-likeness. "Every detail a step." Then how important every smallest detail. There is nothing which "does not matter." Everything "matters." And, further, why fear dying? It is but one more step, to be taken in the same strength as that next preceding and all preceding; the one step which carries the runner over the line which marks the goal attained; but, except for that, perhaps not intrinsically so difficult or so important as many another preceding. Let every detail of life have its right direction, and carry us forward.

II. (*a*) *Progress in a definitely marked-out course.*—The runner is kept right by rules and bounds imposed from without. (*b*) The thing that grows is kept right in its progressive development from within, according to the "law" of its very life. The plant or the body obeys the ideal of its kind or order. The oak, the moss, unfold themselves and assimilate and dispose into their structure new material, in obedience to the life within them. No need to watch or take pains that in pattern or kind the leaves shall grow those of the moss or the oak. So the new life in the soul has its ideal and its laws. It will naturally show a developing progress, the features characteristic of the Christ-life appearing of themselves. But the Racer is only kept right as he keeps within bounds prescribed; he may go wrong at any point. On this side stand God's "Thou shalts"; on the other His "Thou shalt nots." Within these lies the one, only path to the goal and the prize. If in his advance the racer has not submitted to the direction or the restraint of these, he runs "unlawfully" and "*uncertainly*." He may not be surprised if he find himself, after all, "*cast away*" as the result of the Judge's verdict. If all other indications of the course fail, the steps of Christ are the supreme summary of all direction. What He did, and, above all, the principles of His words and acts—these are His "steps." They show the path in which alone progress can be made.

III. *The progress of growth is solitary; that of running is in company.*—The one palm will grow as well solitary in an oasis as in a grove of palms. No tree helps the next to grow. The children in a family grow hearty or weakly independently of each other. As there is a spiritual life which must be lived, and progress which must be made, *alone*. A man might be, if need were, a great saint in a great solitude. It would be one-sided sainthood. No Christian fellowship or united worship can do the work of the closet and the searched Word. But the progress of Running is progress in company; all the helpfulness of companionship and sympathy is brought into use. The runners in training for athletic contests will secure a friend to run by their side during the last "lap" of the course; by the fresh and unexhausted vigour of the friend to help themselves over the strain of the last portion of their path. The sloth or eagerness of one Christian's progress will affect the pace of a fellow-runner. His steady pursuit of the prize may decide some feebler, wavering soul just feeling the first strain after the eagerness of the start is over, and beginning to wonder whether, after all, the prize is worth such an effort to win.

IV. *Growth speaks of a steady, quiet progress;* not to be measured from moment to moment, but palpable enough in accumulated results. We see that the plant *has* grown, or the body, but not the actual growing. Racing puts forward the *continuous, eager, straining effort*, and the *concentration of it upon the one thing—the crown*. Our life is no "walk-over" the course; no lounging parade towards

the goal; but "racing," with all the eagerness of competition, where the racers are companions, but not competitors. There is no turning aside to examine the beautiful sculptures and altars by the side of the course; no stopping to exchange greetings with the friends amongst the spectators. ["This one thing I do" (Phil. iii. 13) is well illustrated by the last words shouted by the "coach" to the men in the trial eights on the river: "Now then, *keep your eyes in the boat*; look at the shoulder of the man in front of you; *don't think of anything but the time and the stroke.*"] The racer's progress is possessed by one idea: "The prize," "the *crown*." He sees nothing but that. From head to foot, from the finger-tip of his outstretched hand to the extremity of the foot, which barely touches the ground from one step to another as he strains along, and flies rather than runs—every inch of him, ever muscle in his frame, says, "The Crown!" Everything is made to bend to that; everything in life which will not help progress is discounted or dismissed; all must help to win the goal and the Judge's award. The Christian man knows what he wants, and makes that the serious, ruling business of his life. [In Heb. xii. 1 are the added ideas of training away all superfluous "*weight*," every ounce which is not bone or muscle, which will help in running, and of stripping off all encumbering, "clinging" (= "easily besetting") garments.] Look at the runners. So run, as they do, that ye may obtain. It is not never-ending progress leading to no definite issue; an endless seeking and never finding; an unending effort which attains to no prize. [Edward Irving exclaims, "Probation does not lead to probation, but to issues!" (*Divine Judgments*, vii.); to "*crowning*" or "*cast-away*."] "A great deal of trouble to make Christian progress!" Certainly. But see Prov. xiv. 4: "Where no oxen are, the crib is clean; but," etc. Nothing is easier than have a clean stable, and to escape the "trouble" of cleansing it; but the indolent man must be content to forego the "increase which is by the strength of the ox."

Ver. 27. *An Apostle's Peril.*—Both words, that for "preach" and that for "castaway," are, themselves or their cognates, so common in St. Paul that we need not overpress the derivational meaning of even the former, or necessarily regard them as saturated with suggestion springing from the imagery of a racer. The herald who has called others and induced them to enter for the prize, who has announced the conditions of the competition and even seemed to be joining in the race himself, comes to the judge's seat for the crown. "No crown for you; you have not yourself submitted to the rules, have not contended 'lawfully'" (2 Tim. ii. 5). And he turns away from the judge's seat filled with the beginnings of the disappointment of an eternal failure. Probable; suitable to the context; true; but not certainly to be got out of the words.

**I. An official application of the words.**—*Paul's peril is from his* **body.**—He "keeps his body under." Must take this precisely for what he says: not the "flesh," but the "body,"—a narrower and very definite source of danger. Sin in Gentile life ran most frequently into physical excess. All heathenism, all natural human life, gravitates sooner or later into indulgence of the three physical appetites. Mere human wisdom and morals have no sure reason why these should not be indulged; the tendency is always to treat bodily sins as venial, or even indifferent actions. Strangely enough, also, the same temperament which makes some men, some ministers, seem highly receptive of the Spirit's enduement of power, appears to expose them to the assault of physical temptation. From high spiritual exaltation to bodily excess is not an uncommon fall. Paul seems to have been by temperament and by special grace in little peril in one particular direction.

[1 Cor. vii. 7, as usually interpreted, but the inference is by no means so certain as is generally assumed]. And he may be in some degree identifying himself with his readers, and the "I" not be entirely personal, but rather representative. A real danger to a minister arises from the frequent association with women in the work of his life, whether as grateful and attached hearers, or busy helpers, or the objects of his labours. There are dangers at the hospitable tables of his congregation. Dangers of indolence fostered by the sedentary nature of his work in the study. Nowadays ministerial athletics may become a peril. Paul is in danger from his body; and, further, *in two particulars* in this very chapter does he give the body a check. "Paul's refusal of maintenance, and the bodily toil resulting thereupon, and his refusal to eat meat which might injure a weak brother, were blows against the spiritual power of his own body, and tended to make the body more and more a servant of the spirit within" [Beet, *in loco.* We may add also]: All the physical dangers and suffering which he not only submitted to, but accepted and gloried in (2 Cor. iv. 10, vi. 5, xi. 23-27), as the accompaniments of his work for his Master, became, through his persistent, voluntary pursuit of a career which made him run the gauntlet of so many blows upon his body, really in effect his own buffetings of his body. All the exhausting physical toil of the modern ministry; long walks, wearying pastorising; the contact, so repugnant to all the training and instincts of a gentleman, with physical squalor, dirt, disorder, and disease in the fulfilment of his labours; unwelcome exposure to all weathers;—all may be sanctified into blows which "keep the body under." Asceticism, ingeniously, gratuitously, inventively prescribed, is uncalled for. In the direct application of the possible figure (above), official defect, and condemnation of his official life and work, are most prominent. But not apart from *personal* unfaithfulness and failure, and a *personal rejection.* [He regards it as quite possible for a teacher to lose his life's superstructure and building, whilst himself being saved because on the one foundation (1 Cor. iii. 14, 15).] Personal unfaithfulness is by far the commonest cause of ministerial and official failure. Not the *apostle* only, but the *man*, has to take account of the liability to be at the last a "castaway." So then:

II. **An application of the principle to the personal life.**—1. Every Christion may become a "castaway," and miss the crown. [The thought, but not the same (original Greek) word, in Luke ix. 25.] All safety is of God's grace, with which the man must co-operate; [and the co-operation is in the strength of grace also]. The grace must go all the way, for the peril goes all the way. [To the last the Christian soldier is not on the parade-ground, but on the battle-field. He must hold himself ready for fighting or sudden attack at any moment. No "standing at ease"! Danger never far away.] 2. No man is exempt because of high honour, long service, or great success in the work of God; Paul had all these. Nor because of great gifts or grace at one time enjoyed; Paul had these. Through these, indeed, fatal temptation may reach the soul; *e.g.* if a man thus honoured and endowed become proud, self-satisfied, self-reliant to the exclusion of dependence upon God's grace. 3. Each man should know his own liability, his own vulnerable point. Perhaps, safe everywhere else, he may, like Achilles, be in danger at the *heel*; the lowest part of his nature, that wherein he touches the earthly most nearly, may be the point of attack, rather than the heart or the exalted intellect. 4. Each man should "exercise" himself [Acts xxiv. 16; the physical training of the combatant in the games]. Keeping *himself* well in hand; taking care that the spiritual is always the dominant element in his life. Yet the self-distrust,

the watchfulness over oneself, the fear of the sad possibility of after all missing the prize, must not be so dwelt upon as to become a morbid dread, or a haunting terror, overshadowing with gloomy clouds the "joy of the Lord." The case of a "castaway" is by God's grace a very rare one, though a possible one. Moreover, dwell also upon the grace for the faithful, patient, successful running of the course until we say, "I have finished my course" (2 Tim. iv. 7). [There is yet a Greater Runner than Paul Who is proposed for our contemplation (Heb. xii. 1, 2): "Looking *at* (as well as *unto*) Jesus," who has won His prize. Did He, may we not say, "keep under His" very "body"?] Leading up to the temple of Neptune at Corinth, close by the Isthmian race-ground, Pausanias the traveller saw two hundred statues of victors in the games, ranged in honourable array on either side of the path. What an inspiration to after-competitors! We, too, have our array of victors. Amongst the most distinguished stands the figure of Paul. No "castaway" after all! And the grace which kept him and crowned him may keep and crown any of us!

## *HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.*

Vers. 8-10. *The Law of God is—*
I. Reasonable.
II. Humane.
III. Comprehensive.
IV. Just.—[*J. L.*]

Or thus:—

Vers. 8-10. *Principles of Equity.*
I. Commend themselves to reason.
II. Are enforced by the Law of God.
III. Are of universal application.
IV. Contribute by their operation to the best interests of all.—[*J. L.*]

Vers. 15, 23. *Paul an Example of—*
I. Self-denial.
II. Humility.
III. Disinterestedness.
IV. Affability.
V. High motive.—[*J. L.*]

Ver. 16.
I. What to preach: "The Gospel."
II. How to preach: "Without glory to self *in any way*."
III. Why preach? "Woe."—[*J. L.*]

Ver. 24. *Six Earnest Counsels on the Race of Life.* (*A Sermon to the Young.*)
I. **Trifle not**; the business is earnest.

["Each word we speak hath infinite effect;
Each soul we pass must go to heaven or hell;
And this our one chance through eternity;—
To drop and die like dead leaves on the brake,
Or like the meteor-stone . . .
Kindle the dry moors into a fruitful blaze.
Be earnest, earnest, earnest,—mad, if thou wilt!
Do what thou dost as if the stake were heaven
And that thy last deed ere the judgment day." (Kingsley, *Saint's Tragedy.*)]

II. **Delay not**; the opportunity is short.

III. **Err not**; the path is narrow. ["*Narrow!*" Yes; as the railway lines make a "narrow" track for the engine and its train. But *the "narrow" grip* of the rails upon the wheels *is safety* for the travellers. "*Liberty*" from their compulsion to keep the track *is danger, disaster, ruin.* Plenty of liberty to run forward, *in the only safe direction*, with all prudent speed.]

IV. **Divide not your attention**; the work is difficult. ["The children of this world are, in (for the aims and purposes of) their generation, wiser than the children of light." The "Jack-of-all-trades" danger of some characters.]

V. **Relax not your efforts**; he only that endureth *to the end* shall be saved.

VI. **Faint not**; the prize is glorious. —[*J. L., in part.*]

# CHAPTER X.

## *CRITICAL NOTES.*

Ver. 1.—Notice "*for*," true reading, connecting closely with ix. *ult.* *Q.d.* "I am not secure from becoming a 'castaway'; you are not yet sure of the prize; *for* it is ever a law of God's people and their life," etc. **I would not . . . ignorant.**—Found (with slight variation) in Rom. i. 13, xi. 25; 1 Cor. xii. 1; 2 Cor. i. 8; 1 Thess. iv. 13. Add (for the thought) 2 Cor. viii. 1. He is a "*steward of the mystery*," and is anxious to get what is entrusted to him dispensed. **Our fathers.**—Evidently the sin animadverted upon in this chapter is the liability and temptation of the Gentile section of the Church. But he is a Christian who still claims "*the fathers*" as his own; (perhaps some of the Gentiles had been proselytes before conversion to Christianity). The Church is the real Israel; the continuity of the dispensations and of the covenant of God (cf. Gal. iii. 7-9, 14, 29) is maintained in the deep unity of One Covenant People, whether for some centuries accidentally Israelite, or now Gentile and Israelite indifferently. As in the parallel fact that he appeals to the Old Testament when dealing with Gentile Christians as well as with Jewish, the whole Past belongs to the new Church,—its Scriptures, its "*fathers*," its God. Or, conversely, as here, "the Church in the wilderness" (Acts vii. 38) had our Sacraments and our Christ—"whom *they* tempted" (ver. 9)—before us. **Under . . . through.**—Literal, historical, but "*in*" (ver. 2) passes over to the underlying significance. Quite worthless as bearing upon the question of the *mode* of baptism, unless perhaps as an *ad hominem* argument against a certain type of disputant, thus: "The cloud sprinkled them, the sea splashed them with its spray; the only immersion was that of the doomed Egyptians!" But the question how much water should be used is parallel with the question how much bread should be eaten, how much wine drunk, in order to a valid participation in the Lord's Supper. [The question of the *subjects* of baptism *is* of vital significance.]

Ver. 3. **Spiritual.**—Not to be discussed apart from the specialised meaning of "*spiritual*" in chaps. ii., iii. "Belonging to the realm of facts in which God the Spirit and the awakened 'spirit' in man, and these in communion by the gracious action of the Holy Spirit upon the latter, are the leading and typical facts." Very pertinent is Rev. xi. 8: "which spiritually is called Sodom." Also Gal. iv. 24. The Manna (Exod. xvi. 14, 15, xvii. 6), with Christ's comment, John vi. 31, 32 (and Ps. lxxviii. 24). Twice a rock was smitten—a "rock" (*tzur*) at Rephidim, under Sinai, and at Kadesh a "cliff" (*selah*); in the first year of the Exodus, and in the last, just before the new start to Canaan, respectively. These are quite sufficient basis for Paul's use of the Old Testament narrative, without supposing him to sanction or adopt the foolish Rabbinical fables of the rock in Rephidim being an isolated mass which, with its spring of water, gathered itself into a quasi-globular form, "like a swarm of bees," and, rolling along by itself, or even "carried by Miriam [!]," accompanied the host through their wilderness wanderings. This can scarcely have been anything but an allegory to the Rabbis themselves; and even if it be as old as Paul's time—which is not certain about anything in the mass of material vaguely called the Talmud, whose earliest *written* form dates many years later—the utmost that can be said is well put by Dr. Driver: "The particular expression chosen by the Apostle may have been *suggested* to him by his acquaintance with the legend current among the Jews; but it is evident that he gives it an entirely different application, and that he uses it, not in a literal sense, but figuratively" (*Expositor*, January 1889). Stanley also points out that "the cloud" and "the sea" are not called "*spiritual*"; the manna and the water from the rock were already Messianically expounded by the Jewish teachers; whilst, until Christian baptism had been instituted, no use of the cloud and sea would be suggested, and would only occur to a Christian Rabbi like Paul.

Ver. 5.—Cf. Heb. iii. 7—iv. 13 for the general strain of this paragraph. Also cf. "*All . . . all . . . all . . . all . . . many*" here with "*All . . . all . . . all . . . some*" in ix. 22. *Q.d.* "I may do all I can do, God may do all He can do, yet some will not be saved. See to it that ye are saved." [Cf. Christ's reply: "Few or many, strive yourself to enter" (Luke xiii. 23).]

Ver. 6. **Examples for us**, or "examples *of* us," which? Grammatically each finds supporters. Both are true; the former because the latter is true; on the general principle of the paragraph, that the "History of *the Church*" may be extended backward into even wilderness days. **Evil things.**—Quite general in reference; and "*lust*" must not be confined to the sin of ver. 8. (Cf. Rom. vii. 7; Jas. i. 15; 1 John ii. 16.)

Ver. 7. **Idolaters.**—In the same sense as in ver. 14. No sudden and complete lapse is contemplated, but the complicity with, and countenance of, idolatry involved in eating at the public heathen banquets, which of course might prove the first step to a complete relapse. For the history, see Exod. xxxii. 6. *Play* was in fact, but by no necessary implication in the word, lascivious "*play*" or "sport." At Corinth notoriously, but in heathenism everywhere, idolatry was linked with, degenerated into, sensuality; and even made sensuality service to the gods, and a means of enrichment of the Temple treasuries. [Men and women "presented their bodies a living sacrifice" (Rom. xii. 1).]

Ver. 8.—Num. xxv. 1-9 (and Josephus) say 24,000, not 23,000. "Paul follows a Jewish tradition which deducted 1,000 as being the number of those who were hanged by the judges, so that only 23,000 would be killed by the plague" (Evans). Most modern commentators dismiss as valueless all attempts at removing the apparent discrepancy, and would account the discrepancy itself of small importance, as "a slip of Paul's memory," or "a slip of the pen of Paul's amanuensis"; either way obviously regarding his inspiration and that of the Epistle as not absolutely requiring "inerrancy in the original autographs." Certainly "*in one day*" is not so emphatic as to imply "and a thousand more, the balance, on another."

Ver. 9.—Note "*Lord*," not "*Christ*," is now the widely supported reading. Yet "'Lord' and 'Christ' equally refer to Christ's presence in the Old Testament, as implied in ver. 4; Jude 5; Heb. xi. 26" (Stanley). Moreover, something is due to the form of the sentence; it is not expressly said that Israel tempted Christ; *we* do "tempt Christ." [For similar Gospel turns given to Old Testament phrases and facts, see, besides Heb. xi. 26, Heb. xi. 7; Rom. iv. 13: cf. again this with Matt. v. 5 (Ps. xxxvii. 11), *ib.* 3.] **Tempted.**—Num. xxi. 4, 6. See homiletic material on ver. 13. Here "put God's patience to the test." The word is strengthened here with a prefix which intensifies its meaning: "put Him to *uttermost* proof"; "unbelief, impatience, presumptuousness" being elements in their sin; suggesting a "longing for the sensual gratifications of their old heathen life, and a desire to shake off the restraints of Christianity" (Ellicott).

Ver. 10.—Num. xvi. 41-50. The murmuring against Moses and Aaron being perhaps covertly intended as a suggestive parallel to the Corinthian murmuring against Paul's Apostolic authority. Yet it of course aims higher than at any human authority. **The destroyer.**—*Q.d.* "the destroying angel," whose physical instrument of chastisement was "a plague." As in 2 Sam. xxiv. 16; Isa. xxxvii. 36. So Paul discloses a personal, Divine wrath behind the prevalent sickness and the deaths at Corinth (xi. 30).

Ver. 11. **Happened . . . were written.**—There was a purpose moulding the *facts*; the *written record* was also the expression of a purpose. If we may use the human analogue: just as the writer of "a novel *with a purpose*" first constructs his characters and his story, and then publishes his teaching through the vehicle of his narrative, by writing and printing it. The vehicle of instruction is here not a fiction, but a history ("*these things happened*"), in which the sovereign "authorship" of God and the absolutely free activity and "authorship" of man are found, as always, in "collaboration." **Ends of the ages.**—The great dispensational periods in God's whole Redemption history: Antediluvian, Patriarchal, Mosaic. In a sense these are successive, the Christian age being the last; after Christianity, Eternity. Yet the truer view sees what is essential in each running on side by side with the next later to arise, so that all "*arrive*" together at the beginning of the "*age to come*" (Matt. xii. 32; cf. significantly, Mark x. 30). **For ensamples.**—"*Typically*," as ver. 6. So Rom. v. 14 (strengthened by 1 Cor. xv. 45). The serviceableness of the Old Testament for teaching New Testament truth is not a happy accident, but the result of the intention of Him Who is the Author of History.

Ver. 13.—"Take *warning*. But also take *courage*!" See homiletic treatment.

Ver. 15.—"I take you at your own valuation; the more reason, if you are such wise men, that you should see how my warning is warranted."

Ver. 16. **Cup of blessing.**—The name given to the third [or fourth,—authorities differ hopelessly] cup of wine solemnly drunk at a Passover Supper, over which the master of the feast said, "Blessed be Thou, O Lord our God, the King of the World, who hast created the fruit of the vine." [This is the starting-point of the Saviour's thought (John xv. 1).] But the name was already associating itself with the Christian custom of pronouncing a blessing or thanksgiving in connection with "*the* cup" at the Lord's Supper. "*After the same manner*" (xi. 25) implies that He gave thanks over His cup (ver. 21) as well as over His bread; and the first giving of thanks, that over the bread, is called "*blessing*" in Matt. xxvi. 26. (On the general subject, see Separate Homily on xi. 20.) Note that "*communion*" here, "*partakers*" (ver. 18), and "*fellowship*" (ver. 20) are cognate words, as shown in the R.V. Vers. 18, 20 are thus exegetical of the "*communion*" of this verse. ("Partakers *with* Christ" or "partakers *of* Christ," in Heb. iii. 14, has, as matter of mere verbal exegesis, the same ambiguity as here between "Common participation with each other *in*," and "Communion *with*, the blood of Christ (*i.e.* ultimately with Himself). The exact meaning will be for each

man determined by his reading of the whole teaching of the New Testament upon the subject. **We . . . we.**—No definite, or decisive, pronouncement as to the persons who did, or who rightly should, "administer." Paul's "we" is the French "*on*," *q.d.* "Which is broken in our Churches in our custom and manner of having amongst us 'the Lord's Supper.'" "*We Christians*, as a new religious community."

Ver. 18. **After the flesh.**—Showing that he has been all along writing in the presence of the thought of a continuous "spiritual" "Israel." The custom of making a sacred meal of the greater part of the flesh of the peace offerings is in Lev. viii. 31; Deut. xii. 18, xvi. 11; 1 Sam. ix. 23, 24, etc. This gave Paul an argument appealing to the Jewish-Christian section of the Church. **With the altar.**—Not, as the parallels would suggest, *with God*, as though that were too solemn to say in such a connection.

Ver. 19.—"Do I contradict what I said in viii. 4, or in Rom. xiv. 14?" [1 Tim. iv. 4 his still unchanged conviction.] "For Christians I said indeed that these things have no real significance; to the heathen around you they have a very real significance; and the powers of the world of evil take good care that they shall have to themselves a very real significance also."

Ver. 20. **Devils.**—"*Dæmons;*" quoted from Deut. xxxii. 17. In the New Testament there is only one "*devil*"; the "*demons*" are many (Gospels *passim*). Stanley would soften down the meaning here to "divinities," and "more especially to those heroes and inferior divinities to whom alone (according to the belief of this later age), and not to the supreme rulers of the universe, sacrifices as such were due." But this enfeebles the strong antithesis which underlies Paul's argument and remonstrance, ver. 21; it is also against the New Testament usage of the word, which is everywhere (except Acts xvii. 18, where the speakers are heathens) evil spirits, spiritual beings, who form part of the Satanic order and realm (Eph. vi. 12 for example, is definite, and of decisive authority). "It is assumed everywhere in the New Testament that the abstract power and rule of sin have taken concrete form in superhuman beings, acting under one personal head, and bringing evil influences to bear on the human face. . . . Therefore every act of sin is obedience (Rom. vi. 16) to these superhuman enemies, and tends to carry out their purposes of death. For idolatry is the ritual of sin. It is therefore the ceremonial of the rule of evil spirits over men. Consequently, though the heathen neither intend nor know it, every act of idolatry, and whatever tends to support it, is a *sacrifice* laid on the altar of *demons*" (Beet). Very significant how far Paul is from any apologetic recognition of the (perhaps) original purpose of an idol,—to assist the worshipper to fix attention in worship, and its tribute to the necessity of human nature to worship something. There are fragments, instincts, of truth in all idolatry; but practically it is evil, only evil, sensual, demoniac.

Ver. 22.—A very good illustration of the meaning of "*tempting God.*"

Ver. 23.—See Separate Homily on vi. 12.

Ver. 24.—Note the significant "*also*" in the second member of the similar saying in Phil. ii. 4.

Ver. 25. **For conscience' sake.**—This does not mean "Let sleeping dogs lie! Shut your eyes and go on. Do not raise the question!" but "There is, before God, no reason to raise any question; there is *really* no question to raise, *for*," etc. So in ver. 27. But, *accidentally*, a question of conscience becomes involved in the matter under the circumstances of ver. 28; yet even then only for *the brother's* conscience' sake, directly. Indirectly, any want of consideration for him which ends in spiritual harm to him, will mean "*judgment*," and *condemnation*, of the first man's "*liberty*."

Ver. 27.—Will of course be, not a public heathen festival banquet—there he must not go at all; but one in a private house, and that also a mere friendly banquet.

Ver. 28.—"Don't *hurk* difficulties of conscience;" as ver. 25 means, "Don't *make* difficulties."

Ver. 30.—"I don't blame him for his not unnatural condemnation of me; nor is God's condemnation of such a use of my liberty unjust; I only blame myself. Why should I persist in doing what brings even this indirect condemnation? It would have been better to abstain, although I could, having regard only to myself, eat with thankfulness" [="*by grace*"]. Perhaps with a reminiscence of the "blessing" of the cup and the bread in the most sacred meal of all.

N.B. xi. 1 really concludes this chapter. "*Imitators of me*," iv. 16; Eph. v. 1; 1 Thess. i. 6, ii. 14; Heb. vi. 12; 1 Pet. iii. 13; (and for the thought) Heb. xii. 1, 2.

*HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Whole Chapter.*

**I. An ancient piece of history**; lighting up
**II. A modern question of conduct.**

I. 1. Corinth may borrow light and teaching from the Wilderness of Sinai. The ordinary, every-day type of man in a busy, wicked centre of trade and commerce may go back for teaching to a singular, isolated people, in special, unprecedented, unparalleled conditions of national, social, religious, personal life. The Gentile Christian in Corinth may, must, listen to the teachings of the story of Ancient Israel. Israel, like Another, is "given for a witness to the peoples" (Isa. lv. 4); a standing embodiment, in its history and its Scriptures, of some great Truths of God. The facts "*happened*"—were made to happen, such of them as depended on the sole will of God—to be a Revelation; they were also "*written*" down to be a Revelation (ver. 11). The "*ends of the ages*" were *come* upon these men in Corinth. The last "*age*" of the Redemption history was begun. No preceding age had really passed away. Beginning successively, they had run on concurrently, and now were mingling their course with this newest-arisen contributory to the stream of history. They were all still needed. No one of them had really ever become obsolete. Each had contributed much to its next successor; but it had also within it principles, examples, methods, of God's government, always needed somewhere, by some nation or individual, and essentially applicable universally. And for these "*wise*," *fin de siècle* Corinthians (one might almost call them), at their own valuation of themselves, there was teaching, *admonitory* teaching. Nothing that is of God's essential truth ever passes away. It may clothe itself, He who makes history may clothe it, in new forms, of longer or shorter persistence; but when the form perishes, the spirit and the essential principles remain. Very notably all true of the last of the bygone "*ages*,"—that of "*Mosaism*" (ver. 2) and its history and institutions. So closely did this mimic or suggest the coming final age; so wonderfully parallel were the historic Israel of the wilderness, and the new Israel of faith, just then beginning to be gathered out of many cities and peoples and tongues and religions; with such an entirety of transfer of all that was of abiding significance was the old "age" passing over, passing on, under the new forms of the last "age" of all; that the division line was, to the men who, like Paul himself, had lived in both, scarcely more than the formal break between two chapters of the written record of a history that never pauses in its course, and does not show any abrupt cleavage between old and new. Not only was human nature at Sinai, or Kadesh, or in the weary waste of the Arabah, the same human nature as at Corinth; not only were the great, broad outlines and principles of God's dealing with the sins and the needs of a chosen people those on which His unchangeableness still must needs run, in dealing with a Church chosen out of the Corinthian world; but, more, it really was one continuous history of one continuous Church. There really never had been, nor could be, but one "seed of Abraham," one people on whom were incumbent the responsibilities, in whom were vested the privileges, of the covenant with Jehovah's "friend." Every Gentile may read the Jewish Scriptures as his Scriptures; the Jews were not authors or exclusive proprietors, but "librarians" for the world's sake; the Gentile Christian may claim *the "fathers"* as his too (ver. 1). The historic form was just then changing under men's eyes, and in men's personal knowledge; but one Corporation, one Church, embraced Sinai and Corinth, and will include every local Church and every century until literally "*The End*" of the earthly ages comes (xv. 24). The men of old were but "*patterns of*" the new men come or to come. And because they were patterns of them they were "*examples for*" them (ver. 6). Without essential resemblances history could teach nothing. If, so to speak, the body corporate

had no personal identity under all changes of growth and development, it might as well have no memory; the Past would mean nothing to the Present or the Future. The teaching value of all History depends upon the unity of Man. The teaching value of sacred ancient history depends upon the oneness of man, and sin, in God's purpose and work of Redemption. 2. So, then, we see really **one Church**, Jewish and Christian, in historical sub-division. (1) **They had our privileges** (vers. 1-4); (2) **we have their perils** (vers. 5-10); but (3) they did reach, or might have reached, Canaan, as our Exodus, too, may be completed; we may have their "*way of escape*" (vers. 11-13). (1) We have not copied theirs; theirs preluded ours. The Church may now read the significance of its very sacraments in—not *read* it *back* into—the Cloud and the Sea and the Manna. The child in Christian ideas may now read the riddle of the smitten Rock and the outflowing water. The word of the enigma is "**Christ.**" "*That rock was Christ.*" Indeed, to borrow the fantastic figure or fable of the Rabbis, a grace flowed forth from Him which accompanied their journey—the Spirit (cf. John vii. 37-39), given forth from Christ, though not in the abundance, nor in the special "adoption grace" (Rom. viii. 15-17), which are the glory of the Church of Christ, given forth *from* Christ "*before* Christ." [Noteworthy how the two strikings of rocks to bring forth water, occurred, the one in the first year of the wanderings, the other at Kadesh, after the long thirty-eight years' *parenthesis*, the "suspension" of the covenant history; as though, when the new generation is to begin from Kadesh its march to Canaan, it is to have its Rock and Water, just as the old had at their outsetting.] The camp was full of God; the history was full of miracle, which is only the world of God and of "*spiritual*" things, breaking through the accustomed veil behind which He ordinarily chooses that it shall lie concealed, and that He shall do His work. The world of things "*spiritual*" extended itself, and included within its circle the "*Rock*," the "*drink*," the "*meat*" (vers. 3, 4). They were all for the time lifted up and became "*spiritual*," tokens and material instruments of the manifested presence and blessing of God. [Indeed, may we go further and say that these were to Israel as true "sacraments" as are those of the Christian Church? Did they receive the same grace as we, though in connection with another covenant token? John vi. would almost carry the weight of an inference that, as to a Christian, believing partaker the bread is, between him and his Lord Christ, the pledge and seal, and is also the symbol, of all the grace of "the New Covenant" (xi. 25, also Heb. viii. 8-13), so to a believing, obedient Israelite the Manna, for example, might be a sign and seal of "old covenant" grace, which is but "new covenant" grace in its beginnings and in scantier measure. [Gal. iii, 8, 14; it was "the Gospel" of justification by faith which was preached to Abraham; it is "the blessing of Abraham" which "comes upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ."] The men of the ancient order had their "baptism," when the cloud and the sea, with its waters, put the same obvious, visible demarcation between the old life of bondage and the new life of liberty as baptism puts in our case; [it is "*burial*" (Rom. vi. 4; Col. ii. 12), the express, formal, visible token of a real "death" to the old life. A man who is carried to his burial is obviously by everybody accounted dead; he presumably *is* dead]; and when, moreover, just as we were by our baptism bound to Christ, the Representative of our God, to accept Him as our Lawgiver and Mediator, and to render all obedience to all God's words spoken by His mouth, they were in parallel manner bound to God's earlier Representative and Lawgiver and Mediator, to accept him and obey,—"*baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.*" As we sit at the Table of our Lord Christ, so they had spread daily for them God's "table in the wilderness" (Ps. lxxviii. 19), and ate and drank with [and *of* (John vi. 53-58)] Christ. Even so do we sit down at a peace-offering banquet (ver. 18) where the Host Whose

guests we are is also the Sacrifice once put upon "*the altar*," and Who is now also the Provision upon the table. We and they **share in common privileges** and in a common grace. But (2) **we share their perils,** their one great danger, and the subordinate dangers that contribute to it. "*Let him that thinketh, . . . take heed lest he fall*" (ver. 12). They fell,—"*many of them*," most of them. All with their (Mosaic) "*baptism*"; all with their (wilderness) Table and its ("*spiritual*") viands; all safely out of Egypt and safely commencing their Exodus under Moses' hand and care: but not all retaining the "*good pleasure*" of Jehovah so as to enter Canaan. And you, too, of Corinth, who have begun your Christian course, *all* of you; who have partaken of the Baptism and the Table, *all* of you; who have *all* shared abundantly in the full-flowing tide of the Spirit's grace, springing from Him who is our pierced, smitten Rock, [who "came by *water* and blood" (1 John v. 6); see how John turns aside from the simplicity of narrative to clench his statement of fact with, so to say, an affidavit (John xix. 34)]; have a care that you also be not "*overthrown in the wilderness.*" No most abundant ordinances and "sacraments" will save you; no most assured and definite commencement of your Christian course, no most real and blessed past participation in *the* Grace of this new "*age*" of the world, will avail to give you absolute security of completing your course. "*All*" ends in "*some*" (ix. 22), with all man's effort; "*all*" may be diminished by the loss of "*many*" (ver. 5), with all God's grace and the Church's fellowship. Watch! Take heed! Guard your heart; the mischief will begin there. Its "*lust*" (ver. 6) within and "*evil things*" without—your danger lies there, as did the danger of "*our*" common "*fathers.*" Your heathen friends and neighbours spread you another Table; nay, the "*demons*" themselves do it, with a "*demon*" cup. Idolatry slew our fathers; in the banquet to which you are bidden as guests there is idolatry which may slay you,—"*idolatry*" with its riotous, drunken, lascivious "*play*" (ver. 7) for the sequel to its feast. Your city is infamous for the "*fornication*" which cut off three-and-twenty thousand, who quitted Egypt, but never saw Canaan. [Call it by its plain name; let its undisguised shame and sin stand clear in your thought, a thing in all ages accursed of God and His holy Law. Lend no ear to your philosophers who tell you that it is a thing outside the man, and "indifferent"; to the young man's natural appetite, which pleads that either God should not have made him so, or that it is "necessary" and "natural" to indulge it; to the poetry which calls it "love," and weaves around it bewitching verse, till the sin gleams and glows a very virtue, a jewel "set" and enshrined in some of the masterpieces of human genius. God's handling of fornication is with the plague and the sword!] Think how they daringly, wickedly, put to the test the love and patience of "the Angel of the Lord" in their midst, tempting Him, as if to see how far they might go before vengeance should fall. Do not ye so put Christ to the test by complicity with surrounding heathen sin; there is a "wrath *of the Lamb*" which may be awakened; God can still find "*serpents*" to avenge His holiness, outraged by His very people; He will never lack instruments, servants, to execute His judgments. [Perhaps not too far away to illustrate by the wretched man in Southey's *Thalaba*, from whose shoulders grew two *serpents*, which unceasingly gnawed at his face. A sinner is often punished by the "serpents" born of the sin of his own heart or life; and most commonly and terribly in case of "fornication," when the ruined body and the polluted mind become the man's worst scourge.] Take heed lest, if your heart "lust" after the "evil things" you left behind when you came out from heathenism, your lips begin to "*murmur*" rebelliously against the "narrow" and "restricted" life your religion imposes. The journey hard? Yes. No delicacies of Egypt? No. But there is still a "*Destroyer*," of sharp sword (2 Sam. xxiv. 16, etc.) and mighty power. He can execute wrath upon the Egypt you have left. He can

wield His sword against the very Church which has quitted Egypt. "*Flee from idolatry.*" Yet (3) some did find their journey's end in Canaan; with some the Exodus was complete; it might have been for all. You need not fall; there is "access by faith into grace whereby you *stand*" (Rom. v. 2). It was not God's fault if they found that the "*way of escape*" from Egypt led them nowhere but, after all, to death. He "*is faithful*" to you and to them; the breakdown will be on your side, not on His. He knows your strength, your weakness. It *is* hard for you to stand in Corinth; neighbours tempting, wife or husband an unbeliever, perhaps obstinate and persecuting (vii. 12, 13); impossible to move about in your city or to take part in public life, without being confronted with the signs and breathing the atmosphere of idolatry—attractive, sensual, filthy. But your God knows how hard it is, and He will in a thousand ways shelter you from an overwhelming pressure. Take care! Take heart! But again, take care, for

II. This devil-parody of the peace-offering feast in the Temple of Jehovah, and of the supper of the Lord which "*we*" spread, with its "*Bread which we break*," and its Cup "*which we Christians bless*," in the midst of the Church assembly, was more true to the original than many a Corinthian pleader for "liberty" and "breadth" remembered or appreciated. Whatever the heathen worshipper intended or understood, however the Christian partaker in the feast might fine down and minimise the meaning of his action, it was really a devil communion! Nothing less. Will not the Corinthians hear, think, "*judge*" (ver. 15)? To sit at "*the Lord's Table*" is to enter into a very blessed "*participation*" with it, and indeed with the Lord, Whose table it is. (Even as the Israelite, who sits down at the peace-offering banquet, enters into a happy participation with the Altar, with the Religion of which it is the very central Symbol, and indeed with the Jehovah whose Altar it is. He is Jehovah's man who eats there; he is an Israelite.) He is Christ's man who eats *there*; he is a Christian. He who eats at the table, or who drinks the cup, of Aphrodite—nay, of the demon-master of the Feast—whose man then is he? Can he be Christ's, and sit to eat there? Can he be a guest at Christ's table, and go thence to become guest at a demon's table? What congruity is there in his resorting to this table and to that? If the partakers of the old, wilderness "sacraments" brought on themselves the holy wrath of Jehovah by their murmuring and longing for the old life of Egypt, and by their shameless, flagrant, heathen impurity under the very shadow of Sinai itself, will Christians escape with impunity if their heart also lusts, and the lips murmur, and the body lends itself to vilest sin? For what else is indicated by this desire to make idol feasts compatible with a Christian profession? What but a heart like theirs? What less is meant by partaking of "*the table of devils*"? The new Christian Church Order lights up the meaning of the Church Order of the wilderness, and of its institutions. So the new Christian fellowship of the Table, once understood, lights up the fearful significance of the fellowship of the idol table. Who then will tempt the might (ver. 22) of that God Whose "jealous" holiness would not of old, and cannot now, tolerate that one of His people should be married to evil? Stand clear! Take heed! "But you are making too much of this, Paul! There is no 'demon' behind the idol, or its festival. There is nothing behind the idol—nothing at all; yourself said so. Then why make scruple about what is intrinsically nothing?" Well, but the conscience of another may not only make scruple for himself, but, indirectly, for the querist. And even if no "judgment" (ver. 29) come upon his conscience for his own act, let him see to it that his liberty is not condemned of God for the wound it gives, the snare it spreads, to the hurt of a brother's soul. The questioner's conscience has its rights; and the conscience of his less stable or less instructed fellow-Christian, and even that of his heathen neighbour in whose house he sits as a guest, have their rights also (vers. 28, 29). Their weakness

and needless scrupulousness have a right to tenderest consideration from a Christian man. If he violate their right by his inconsiderate liberty, he may "*give thanks*" loudly enough over his "*meat offered to idols*" and "*bought in the shambles*"; he may insistently urge that "*the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof.*" But if he eat, and so make the doubting Christian, or the inquiring heathen, or (still more) the scoffing heathen, "*speak evil*" of him, he is "*judged*" and condemned. "*The earth* **is** *the Lord's;*" and so is the man of too tender conscience; very precious to the Lord and Owner of all things! The Lord seeks "*that man's wealth*" (ver. 24); the strong, "*wise*" (ver. 15) Christian will do so too. As Paul does (ver. 33). Lift up everything, as the Lord's Table with its simple, holy bread and wine does even eating and drinking, to that high level of which happily all our natural life is capable; lift it all up till it become a continual praise: "**To the glory of God.**"

## *SEPARATE HOMILIES.*

Ver. 9. (May be made the occasion of a sermon or sermons upon *Temptation.*)

I. **Neutral sense of word.**—1. Text, whether we read "Christ" or "Lord," reminds us that the "temptations" of the Devil are not the only ones we meet with in Scripture. Experience teaches by many sharp lessons that *man* also can tempt man. This verse reminds us that man can "tempt" God. More than interesting—often very helpful—to get back to the one common meaning from which all these uses of the word have grown; the one which satisfies them all; the only necessary, and exact, meaning of the word in Scripture (unless perhaps in Jas. i. 13, 14). 2. We customarily distinguish between "trials" and "temptations." Easy for a reader of even an English Bible to see that our forefathers did not so sharply divide the words. They could not help distinguishing between the *things*! But the *word* was as often neutral, or good, as evil, in its suggested idea. 3. This is not only a question of the use of English words. Very remarkable and clear case of the intrinsic neutrality of the very idea of *putting to the test* in Mal. iii. In ver. 15 "they that tempt God" and yet "are delivered" are manifestly daringly evil men. But in ver. 10 "prove Me now herewith" employs the same word when, so to speak, inviting men by their consecration of their goods to see whether God will not meet their fair dealing with Him with liberal dealing to them. In both cases men tempt, prove, put God to the test, but with a purpose that gives the quite neutral word a widely differing colouring in the two cases. "Trying God" may be an act of God-honouring faith or of God-daring impiety. The word, the thing, the "testing," was big with twin possibilities. It bore within its womb a temptation born of an evil heart whether of man or devil, and a temptation born of God's good purpose or of man's God-honouring faith. 4. It is of great practical use in our exegesis of Scripture to keep this, the only proper meaning of the word, quite clear from all the accidental associations of evil purpose and result. These are really accidents. In our experience, the temptation is so commonly designed to arouse, or lead to, evil, and so commonly finds its most potent instrument in the evil within the heart, that we make the purpose of evil in him who tempts, and the presence of evil in him who is tempted, essential to "temptation." But, in fact, even when the purpose of the testing is evil, the presence of evil to be appealed to and awakened does not *constitute* the temptation. It makes it *strong*, not *real*. The intention to put to the test makes the reality of the temptation. 5. [Obviously so, or men could not

"tempt God." Thus, too, is removed some of the difficulty connected with the "temptation" of Christ;—some, not all. We say, naturally, "This was no temptation to me," meaning that the tempter, human or diabolic, found no response within, nothing within the heart's citadel to make resistance difficult; [as Nehemiah found added danger and difficulty in the fact that there were men within Jerusalem, by marriage or otherwise allied to the Samaritan and Ammonite enemies outside]. In such a case we almost use His words, as to that particular instance (John xiv. 30). But, speaking accurately, it *was* a temptation, a real putting of us to the test by somebody or some group of circumstances. It is then only popular, and inexact, thought which makes us say of Christ, "How could He be tempted? How could anything be a temptation to Him?" The Adversary was doing on a larger scale, and with a greater intensity of evil, what the "lawyer" did with scarcely any evil intent (Luke x. 25); or His successive questioners, on the "Day of Questions" (Matt. xxii.); all alike were putting Him to the proof to know what He would say and do. The Tempter, *par excellence*, has a wide knowledge of human nature, and a wider experience, derived from years of practice and observation. But he has no certainty beforehand that he will succeed with even a man. From wide experience he knows the heart, but not the individual; he knows man, but not *the* man—not *me*. Christ in the wilderness was a problem to him. Only once before had he seen on earth a sinless man, and he had tried and found him plastic to his evil will and purpose. Now again, after so many centuries, he saw a sinless man. [Perhaps he knew Him "a second Adam"?] Would this One also prove plastic to his will? He tried; he tempted Him. The *reality* of the temptation of Christ is posited there. It is altogether another question how far the fact that He was *secure*, whilst the utmost we can by grace attain to is to be *kept safe*, affects His community and sympathy with us. And another and profoundly mysterious question, what part the forty days' testing, with its culminating threefold attack, played in the personal life of the Saviour Himself; whether He were simply and wholly representative of our Humanity as it was in God's original conception and intention. It is to be remembered that the Personality, tempted through one part of His twofold nature, was the Son, "the second Person of the Trinity."]

II. **The evil sense.**—1. *Men so tempt men.* No more emphatic testimony to the innate evil of man's heart than that man should, often quite *gratuitously*, try to lead others astray; should put stumbling-blocks in the paths of spiritual childhood and weakness. [Like putting, morally, a "chair" on the rail, for the mere pleasure of seeing the ruin wrought to the train.] Why *will* men stand in the way of the drunkard, etc., who wants to climb out of the slough and shame of his old life—stand proffering the old allurements? Why will they beset the path of the prodigal who wants to "arise and go to his Father"? [**Utilia.**—(1) You tempted, and *must* come within near range of the temptation? Hurry by the faster, as a planet or a comet does when nearest to the attracting Sun. (2) You tempted? Stand fast! You may save your tempter as well as yourself. Perhaps he is fighting with his conscience, whilst he is trying to get you to silence yours. (3) The sin of the man who tempts you does not take away the sin of your yielding. Jacob is guilty as well as Esau. (4) "They who ought to have helped me gave me no help and sympathy." No matter. You may not be *so* guilty; but you are guilty. Farrar remarks on: "Cast *thyself* down!" (5) Never talk away a man's "too nice" scruples; they may be his only security against a terrible fall (1 Cor. viii., ix.; Rom. xiv.).] How low that man has sunk who lends himself, for no personal advantage, but

simply for the pleasure of seeing evil ruin good, to be the decoy to lead his fellows into the Devil's trap! [One of the saddest glimpses into the fallen condition of even the world beneath man, that the animals can be trained to do this for their fellows.] Men must needs say to *men*, sometimes, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" as Christ did to Peter. It would seem that in those weeks the thought of His passion and all its accompaniments of agony was present with Christ in unusual vividness. Perhaps Calvary had never so vividly stood in His view until that time. May we say that He had wrestled with His natural and innocent shrinking from the suffering [as afterwards in Gethsemane], and conquered with an utter submission to the will of His Father? And now Peter, His friend, proposes to Him to choose some easier path than that of the cross. "Do not say that, Peter! That is what Satan would like, and has been saying [as, in effect, in Matt. iv. 9, proposing a short and easy "cut" to the throne and the kingdom]; Satan speaks through thy proposal, Peter! Away with the thought! Away with thee, Peter!" Unintentionally they tempt men, and do the work of the Devil, who tempt them to seek an easier path to heaven than that *viâ* Calvary.

2. *Men so tempt God.*—See Synopsis appended. (1) By acting as if daring Him to punish (ver. 22), *e.g.* Korah and his company of censer-bearers; as if putting Him to the proof to see how long His patience will endure, how far they dare go in open, defiant sin. "Let us see whether He will punish, as He says." Or (2) As really, if not so defiantly, by "trading upon" His longsuffering mercy, His readiness to pardon, even at the eleventh hour; continuing in sin, taking little or no care to avoid sin, making little or no effort to cultivate holiness, and yet hoping to retain His favour and their *status* as His children, as if *trying* how much His holiness will bear of sin's offensiveness. (3) By expecting salvation on some other terms than God's or without regarding the published terms of the Gospel at all. "God **so** loved the world," etc., where "*so*" is not "*so much*" but "*thus*"; the one *manner* and the channel of the availableness of the love of God for the world; not the *measure* of it, which lies rather in the fact that it was this "Son" who was "*given*"; men should seek, expect, get, the love through that one Channel, on that one Condition. The man who *will* trust to something or some one else, as, *e.g.*, to himself and what he had been and done, or, quite as often, has *not* been and has *not* done, and yet who will hope to be saved, is *tempting God.* (4) The man who, on no call of duty or of service to souls, thrusts himself into company, or into a business position, or a place of amusement, manifestly unfavourable to his religious life, and yet hopes to escape,—"We shall suffer no harm; God keeps His children anywhere,"—is as really *tempting God* as Christ would have been if He had flung Himself from the Temple pinnacle hoping to alight unhurt. (5) Ananias and Sapphira are a typical case of the many wherein men almost seem as if experimenting whether God can find them out and punish (Ps. lxxiii. 11).

III. **The good sense.**—*God tempts men; "suffers them to be tempted"* (ver. 13), *"leads them into temptation"* (as implied in the Lord's Prayer, Matt. vi. 13). 1. Our moral instinct assures us that God's testing stands apart from the rest in this: *He never designs or desires that, under His tests, men should give way or fall,* and be either overborne by trial or borne down by sin. "God cannot be tempted of evil," we all say with James (i. 13, 14). Let men's evil heart, or the devil's, do their worst, they cannot disturb His peace or sully His awful holiness. Indeed, that holiness of His very being casts, as it were, around Him an awful seclusion of sanctity, within whose sacred precinct He dwells unassailable, unapproachable, by the shafts of temptation. With how much stronger reason do we say,

"Neither tempteth He any man." If evil cannot enter within the awful barrier of His holiness, how much less can we conceive of it as originating within its circle, or that from within that Holy of Holies of burning, blinding sanctity there should issue a volition, a message, a Providence, whose purpose should be to lead a man to sin! Whatever it may mean that God should "lead into temptation," it can never mean that. He never did, nor can, design to awaken, or strengthen, or bring forth into expression or execution, the evil of man's heart. He can only design to bring forth, strengthen, discipline, good. The engineer does not desire to break down, when he tests severely, the newly built bridge. He does not even desire to find flaws or weakness, except that they may be remedied. On the other hand, when the enemy tests a city by assault, or by planning to secure the help of treachery within, he hopes the place may prove pregnable. He hopes he may find weakness or treason, which may give him entrance, possession, mastery. As the engineer tries his bridge, so God tempts men—and only so. As the enemy tests the city, so the Devil or evil men tempt men—and always so. 2. God leads into temptation—tempts men—when He puts them into circumstances of (as we distinguish the word) Trial; the Adversary endeavours to turn them to his own evil account of Temptation. *E.g.* God asks a modern Abraham to give up his Isaac. It is to be a blessing to him; to perfect his consecration; to complete the education of a finished trust, besides making him to others a more glorious example of grace. The diligent Adversary is on the watch, to turn it into an occasion of bitter, or rebellious, thoughts, souring or sanctifying the tempted man. Or God's test may be some great measure of temporal good—a very sharp test of character. It may reveal to a man how little he can bear of advancement, how liable he is to pride, how easily he might grow independent of God. It may leave him humbler, and drive him to prayer, and make him hold all only as the gift of God. It may reveal the man to himself. He may come out of the testing, and go in and out before men an example of enlarged, enriched, ennobled nature, and of humbly borne honour and consecrated wealth. On the other hand, the Devil's endeavour will be to bring out all the evil that lies so near the surface. The pride, the ostentation, the independence of God, may become predominant; the man may be enriched, but narrowed into a mere worldling, "who has his portion in this life." 3. If this liability is always so near, and men are so often ruined, not raised, soured, not sanctified, by the perverted issue of His own providential arrangements, why does God "run the risk"? Why does He "lead into temptation"? or, at the least, "suffer men to be tempted," by devils or men? Full answer has within it whole Problem of Evil. We may suggest: (1) *A human analogy.* A country lad thrust into the life of large city; pleasant, but evil, things all around; men, friendly but evil, ready with their offer of guidance to "see life"; temptations of the streets, the vacant evenings, the absence of restraining observation. And his Christian father knew all the peril, all the boy's weaknesses, when he sent him up to the City, and away from home. With more trepidation sends out his daughter too; "cannot afford to keep them at home; would not be good for my boy if I could—he will never become a man unless tested; he must learn to stand alone, by being left alone, even at the risk of many a stumble or even a ruinous fall; will introduce him to friends, will write him frequently; will help him to stand." When he leads him, thrusts him into the trial of a City life, he leads him into temptation in the only sense in which God does it. [Or we may say: God's ships are not built only to lie safe and snug within the shelter of the breakwater. There are storms outside; they may be wrecked; but the risk must be taken, or they

will do no business and carry no cargo of blessing.] Also (2) we see that not even *the* Son was exempt (Matt. iv. 1); He was "led up into the wilderness—led of the Spirit—to be tempted." [Another *word* in Matt. vi. 13.] Mark (i. 12) is very express: "Driveth, thrusteth Him out" into the wilderness, where, of course, His Father knew that the Evil One would find His Son and tempt Him. We dare not say (see above) that the Son of God needed it personally. Officially He did; His work did; *we* did. Part of His work for us, part of His sharing with us in all things that He must meet, and wrestle with, and overthrow, the same Tempter with whom we must meet and wrestle. [Parallel so far to the death which He *must* representatively die, though no personal necessity lay upon Him (2 Cor. v. 21).] We see just how much His Father did. The place, the hunger, the destiny, which gave the Adversary his opportunity, and became the occasions of his attack, were part of His permitted course. Indeed, they were in the course of the providential arrangements of His Father, made for another, an altogether wise and holy, purpose. So we shall say: "My Father led me into circumstances which put me on my trial. As it proved, and not without His foreseeing it, my evil heart, my diligent Adversary, the closely surrounding world, turned all into temptation. My Father so suffered me to be tempted, led me into temptation, tempted me."

Ver. 13. "*Thus far, no farther!*"—(Of temptation.)

**I. View of God here suggested.**—1. Surely an unwarranted turn is given to the thought when this is read: "Take heed, for though you have hitherto had only such trial as man can bear, there is worse to come!" The true connection of thought in Paul's words conveys a twofold message: "Take heed; take courage!" It would be strange enheartenment to say: "Look out! You will soon have trials such as no man can bear." But the heart of "the God of all comfort" (παράκλησις, 2 Cor. i. 3) loves to hearten His people. "A devotional writer, replying to the question, 'How are we to overcome temptations?' says, 'Cheerfulness is the first thing, cheerfulness is the second, and cheerfulness is the third.' It is very true. Faint heart never won anything, least of all a spiritual battle. . . . Lightness and brightness of heart, an unfailing elasticity of spirit, must characterise the good soldier of Jesus Christ, if he is to break his way to the heavenly country through the serried ranks of his spiritual foes" (Goulburn, *Pers. Rel.*, III. vi.). It is not part of a healthy religion to anticipate trial, whether worse or lighter than has hitherto been known. [Yet if worse come, "a *fiery* trial," Peter would say, "Think it not strange," etc. (1 Pet. iv. 12). *Q.d.* "When it comes your way, and knocks at your door with its urgent hand, do not treat it as a stranger, or an enemy, or refuse it admission into your life, or even grudgingly submit to its intrusion. It is a friend, however strange and rude it may appear; it brings you a blessing; welcome it as from God; do not refuse it."] As to the possibilities of the future, rather rest in—(1) *God's relation to the trial*, and (2) *God's relation to you.* (1) "*Will not suffer.*" Then, if it do not directly originate with Him, it does not come upon you apart from Him. All things, even the course of trials, serve His might. The flood may creep up to, or come rolling in upon, your standing place; but He sitteth above even such waterfloods, and can stay their proud waves when He will—certainly before they swallow up you and your place of foothold upon His faithfulness and love. The free and evil wills of devils and men have their limit, and are subordinated to His will. Except within the limits of His sovereign rule in your life, they can neither themselves create for you, nor modify what He has created, of arrangements of events, or associations with persons, such as put character and the strength of principle to the test in

you. The roaring lion himself cannot go beyond his chain; and the end of the chain is in the hand of your "*faithful*" God. Whatever be our estimate of the literary form of the revelation in Job i. 2—simply literal, or allegoric, symbolic—no question of form involves falsehood in the view there disclosed of God and His relation to evil. It—not to say "he"—must solicit His permit to assail a Job; it can only do it so far as may serve the glory of Jehovah and the moral education of His servant. We are on surer ground in regard to the strain of teaching—some would regard themselves on surer ground as to the actual shape of the facts—when we hear Jesus communicate to Peter—a later Job in this—a colloquy which, behind the veil, and within the real, but to us unseen, world, where He and His Father and the Evil One mysteriously move and meet, had recently taken place in regard to the man Peter. "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not" (Luke xxii. 31, 32). "I cannot tell, now that I look back," says a man of God, "how I got through. If I had known beforehand, I should have said it would have been impossible for me to come out of it unharmed, conqueror, more than conqueror." There had been the colloquy behind the veil. There had been the controlling hand of Him who "*would not suffer*," etc. Do not look out for worse. Take the days in successive detail, as the trial unfolds itself, and meet each new point in the confidence that His hand will "*suffer*" or "*not suffer*," as He knows right. Also (2) "*He is faithful.*" If you can see, or can say, that His character is in any case involved, then your faith, or your appeal for help, has a hold upon Him such as hardly anything else will give you. He regards His people warmly; He regards His own honour "jealously." He is pledged to them. What less is implied in His name "Shepherd"? (Ps. xxiii.). *For the sake of His name* "Shepherd" He will see that "*no temptation*," etc. No matter if you rather, with Paul, conceive of yourself a precious "deposit" lodged with *Christ* for safe keeping "in that day" (1 Tim. i. 12). It is the faithfulness of God revealed, embodied, in Him. In this, as in all else, "he that hath seen Him hath seen the Father." He is the faithful Father "over again." So then—

II. **Temptation is, 1. Wisely adapted,** suited to men (and to *the* man); 2. **Graciously proportioned**; 3. **Mercifully limited** [J. L., who also suggests:] Many suppose that their temptations are: 1. *Singular*, but they are common; 2. *Intolerable*, but they are proportioned to ability; 3. *Invincible*, but there is a way of escape. Illustrate, 1. By the *trucks upon the railways.* Look at them; see figures painted upon their side or the framing, "5-3-0," or the like. Their "load limit." So much, no more, must be put upon that build of truck; that heavier build of truck marked yonder "10-2-0" can carry twice as much. What the temptation suited to angelic nature or strength may be we do not know. He knows what is suited to human nature and its strength of grace. The human build of truck has its load limit. It will never be overpassed. He will not suffer it. "Against regulations," under His mangement. Illustrate, 2. By the *prison surgeon* standing by, as even the hardest criminal receives his quota of lashes. He watches the effect of every stroke. If the full tale of punishment has not yet been administered, but the prisoner can bear no more, he says, "Stop!" The sentence is incomplete, but not another lash may be laid on. Incongruous in many a point, the illustration may serve to make Him real Who sits watching the effect of every stroke which He Himself causes, or else permits, to descend. Not one heavier, not one more, than you can wisely, profitably, graciously be made to endure. 3. (1) It was a true parable when on the top of hill above Nazareth the Pattern Son was hemmed in on all sides by a crowd of angry, murderously angry, Nazarenes;

and yet a way out opened through the crowd; a Power was upon them which held every Nazarene hand in its restraining grasp; "passing through the midst of them, He went His way" (Luke iv. 30). As you will through the most urgently pressing besetment of encircling "*trials.*" (2) How often in such intricate channels as the Kyles of Bute does it seem from the deck as though there were at last a perfect *cul de sac*, and as if to go forward must be to run upon the enclosing shore or cliff. But at the last moment there is the "way of escape," and a new, often a more beautiful, bit of clear course opens up by an unexpected turn; like the unexpected "turns" in trying circumstances which have suddenly opened up perhaps years of clear and happy "run." He has made the channel, and has the map of it under His eye. And His hand, if we will, may be on the helm. (3) How men rightly glorified Captain Kennedy, who brought his steamer safely out of the so fatal hurricane in the harbour of Apia, Samoa. The enclosing barrier reef had its one narrow opening—difficult, perilous, but a practicable "way of escape." Our Captain has "consummate seamanship," and will never fail to hit the exact outlet from the barrier reef of closely encircling trials. (4) To His knowledge, power, heart, there are no insoluble problems of trial or temptation. Wherever He puts you, or suffers you to go on His errand, He can keep you until you reach "the way of escape." Possibly the article in Greek may almost be equivalent to "*its own* way of escape," *i.e.* the particular deliverance belonging to, and best for, that particular trial, God thus "giving His attention" to each case that arises.

Ver. 14. *Flee from Idolatry.*

**I. The general principles underlying Paul's advice in this particular instance.**—1. (1) "You cannot touch even these idol feasts without more or less of complicity with, and countenance given to, the whole system of idolatry." (2) "You cannot give any degree of countenance and support to idolatry, without in that degree disavowing your Lord." Sin "hangs together." No sin is an isolated act. It manifests a tendency of heart; or it carries a principle of action; or belongs to a system of evil, a coherent, organic whole. It might seem a small thing to join in a public banquet, where the viands on the table were largely "meats offered to idols"; especially remembering that such participation was regarded as a matter of good citizenship, "religion" being very much more an affair of a man's civic life than of the individual life. Moreover, "was it not now abundantly clear to every enlightened, thinking Christian in Corinth that an 'idol was nothing in the world,' that these viands were not intrinsically affected in the least by the fact that part of (say) the carcass or of the basket of fruit had been put upon the altar of a so-called 'god'? Could not every man of sense see that in regard to any healthy food there need be raised no question of conscience about eating it? Such entire abstinence as our Jewish friends counselled—was it not narrow, and needlessly repellent to possibly well-disposed people amongst our Gentile neighbours?" Well, but why this hankering after these old ways, this heathen company, these perhaps dangerous festivities, which not seldom ended in a drunken orgie, or in indulgence of gross sensuality? Was the "Christian" heart half idolatrous yet? Was the ploughman looking back from his plough? (Luke ix. 62). Was "Lot's wife" in heart going back to the Corinthian "Sodom," as she thus looked back? Were the Christian Israelites "*murmuring*" that "the fleshpots of Egypt" might not be enjoyed in the camp of God in the wilderness? (vers. 6-10). [Why, in the modern Corinths, all this eagerness to show how compatible with a "broad," "fair-minded," "attractive" Christian life are places and pleasures which, in the current opinion of the "stricter

sort," *and in the current opinion of "the world,"* are accounted "worldly"? Is the heart losing its satisfaction in the joys of the life in Christ; beginning to murmur against its restrictions—they used only to be the instinctively imposed and necessary limitations upon Christian action; beginning to look towards, to move towards, the world again?] But, be that as it might, it perhaps seemed, and might be pleaded, that the connection of the feast with idolatry was of the very slightest, that to touch idolatry there was to touch it at its purest, brightest, or, at worst, at its least defiled and defiling point. No! *To touch it anywhere was to sanction it everywhere!* It might be but the borderland and farthest outskirts of the area of the evil thing, but it was idolatry's ground. The most strictly limited participation in anything belonging to the system, "explained" to the man's own conscience in the most "satisfactory" fashion, would really be, and would be regarded by the idolater as, a patronage and sanction given to the whole. [Not to say that, if the Christian "did but touch the border of the garment" of the Accursed System, an evil "virtue would go forth" and pervade with its power the new life of the soul.] So, in modern Corinths, the "broader" mind pleads for the theatre, sometimes for "the theatre as it might be if only Christian people would not hold aloof from it"; sometimes by carefully choosing the place and the play, and with great circumspection going and coming away "unharmed." But "harm" is a subtle thing, not always immediately to be perceived. And that apart, the Theatre "hangs together"; it is a coherent thing, touching on the one hand—at least dramatic *literature* does—the sublimest reaches of poetry and of creative art, but spreading and broadening downwards from that highest point to depths; at best of inane and vapid folly of language and art, at worst of suggestive or overt sensualism and crime. The most guarded, most strictly limited, participation is, by necessity of experience and fact, taken to cover the whole Thing. The Christian man picks up a very filthy cloth, with dainty thumb and finger taking hold very "gingerly" at the cleanest place he can find, and then lays it down, exclaiming, "There! Who says a Christian cannot touch it without being defiled?" He takes hold of the approximately clean end of a stick; the young man, wavering between the world and Christ, hears him say, "There! I have not defiled my fingers!" and takes hold of the end bedaubed with the foulest "pitch." Even to the man's own conscience the logic is dishonest. Paul's principle is: **"Touch idolatry anywhere, you touch it as a whole. Flee from idolatry."**

2. "In the Church you have a Table, and its feast; your Lord Christ's table; your Lord Christ's Supper. He presides; you partake with Him; you partake *of* Him, He graciously says; you avow yourself there to belong to His brotherhood; you covenant yourself there to belong to Him. At the table and the feast in the temple of Zeus or Apollo or Aphrodite, you partake with—*Demons!* You are gone in to supper, not with a no-god, but *with a demon*! If you do not mean that by the feast, the heathen do, and the demons do. Can you sit there and sit at Christ's supper—both? Choose; you *must* choose. Christ will choose if you do not. He will choose to refuse your allegiance, to refuse His follower who will, forsooth, 'serve two masters.' To partake of the feast is to disavow your Lord." So, again, the foundation principles of life "in the world" ["*in* the Wicked One," 1 John v. 19] are so entirely other than those of life "*in* Christ," that no fusion, no alliance, no truce, between the two is possible. **To partake with the world is to break with Christ. Flee from idolatry.** Comparative Religion, the wider knowledge of heathen faiths and their history, tend to a temper which would make idolatry no such "terrible sin." [Even as the spirit ever and again rises which would *minimise*

the *differentiæ* between the Church and the world] "It is but the perversion of the worshipping instinct; men must worship something. It is but the abuse of the dramatic instinct; men are some of them born dramatic," and the like. "Flee from idolatry." "Ye cannot drink the cup," etc. (ver. 21).

II. **Paul's counsel.**—"*Flee from.*" 1. As there are temptations against which the best defence is "flight" ["*Flee* youthful lusts," 2 Tim. ii. 22. Jeremy Taylor, *Holy Living, Of Chastity*, § iii., "Remedies," 1]; so, better than parley, argument, endeavour after a *modus vivendi* between the two types of life—better for the rescued but imperilled man himself, and better for "the world" that is to be saved out of its "idolatries"—is open, emphatic aloofness and avoidance. "Flee; put the utmost distance between thee and the evil; put it eagerly between thee and it. Touch the evil, in the endeavour to purify and elevate; touch it, even mentally, to battle with it; and you will often suffer, and perhaps be overcome. *Flee from* idolatry. **Flee! FLEE!** [Cf. Exod. xxiii. 13: "Be circumspect; and *make no mention* of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth." Not even a quasi-antiquarian and historical curiosity about the old idolatries of their Canaanite predecessors was to be encouraged; Deut. xii. 30, "Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared; . . . and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods?" (The next step was apt to be) "So will I do likewise." "*Let him that thinketh he standeth*," etc. (ver. 12).] 2. For the personal life, the aloofness and distinction of utter and pointed abstinence may often be the only needed form of "flight." But public and official "flight" may need to be a much rougher-seeming and iconoclastic procedure. The architect and the man of taste look upon the fair ruins of monastic establishments and their churches, and bewail the ruthless spoliation and destruction of exquisite architecture and sculpture; the antiquary laments the loss of countless treasures of religious art, priceless to-day for their historic value and their intrinsic beauty and interest. No doubt there was much purely selfish destruction, and some malicious; but some of the iconoclasm was a necessary violence, as things were, if the evil was to be reformed or uprooted. What relic so precious, historically or religiously, as "the serpent of brass which Moses had made"? Were there no regrets, none to plead that it might be spared, "purified from the abuses which had sprung up around it"? Were there no really good men who "could not see that such 'ruthless' destruction was necessary," when Hezekiah broke up the Nehushtan? (2 Kings xviii. 4). Doubtless; but there are times when the peril of "idolatry" requires the sacrifice of the most honourable, ancient, venerable institution, or opinion, or system; when it is impossible to divorce the thing from its danger and abuse. Such times can afford no nice distinction, no subtle pleading about "underlying good," or "original blamelessness," possible "recoverableness" to good use. When the figure of Jesus cannot be kept simply as an exquisite work of the sculptor's art, but becomes, in its associations and use, an immoral, Jehovah-rivalling, Christ dethroning idol; it must be destroyed, rather than that moral peril shall be incurred. The early Church had perforce to part company for a century or two with the noblest of ancient art. It was self-preservation to "flee from idolatry" in sternest iconoclasm. [The rough surgery of the sword, slaying its three thousand idolaters, was the first "cure" for the moral plague of Israel in the matter of the Golden Calf (Exod. xxxii. 27, 28).] Stately ritual may become idolatrous, when it becomes an end instead of a means:

> "'Tis mad idolatry
> To make the service greater than the God."
> —*Shakespeare.*

"Sweep it away," perhaps. "Flee from idolatry." [Other cases will suggest themselves.] "*Flee* from;" the ship—the Church, the soul—is in peril anywhere near her old moorings. She is only safe in the open sea.

III. **Some familiar idolatries.**—1. "*A calf of Gold.*" [We hear the plea, "*There came out* this calf!" "Really, I seem to touch nothing that does not prosper; I don't quite know how it is. You religious people say God made me so rich. Then He is more than half in fault in that I have the calf to tempt me to idolatry!"] 2. *Human teachers and current ideas,* whether theological or other. The majority must inevitably be dependent upon authority for beliefs and opinions, new or old, orthodox or heterodox. The scientific specialist righteously has claims to be listened to; his work must come before that of the populariser and propagator, and he and his fellow-workers must in the nature of the case find very few who can challenge, or criticise, or verify the facts they announce, and only a slightly larger number who can give a verdict of independent value upon the conclusions they formulate as resulting from other facts. The theologian is a specialist in his own line; and as having given special attention, with special training, to a particular group of facts, may claim to be listened to and to have a presumption set up in favour of his conclusions. But no servile deference should be paid to either. No man may claim that his *ipse dixi* should be of necessity "truth." The "idolatry" of great names and of current opinions, and even of long-established ones, oftener arises within the popular mind than with the specialist. He generally knows he is no "god"; and says (ver. 15), "*I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.*" The deification is oftener the undiscriminating act of the worshipping crowd; every kind of sect—not theological only, by any means—is in danger of setting up its divinity, whose words are an oracle of final authority. Great names tend always to become fetishes. Current, scientific, or theological, or anti-theological theories are apt to become "idols," before which men dare not but bow. Needless scepticism in regard to any new teacher; dogged, unenlightened clinging to and worship of the old; are indefensible. But there is also a hasty, unreasoning, superstitious acceptance and worship of the new—of the *newest*—quite as indefensible. Men need to keep their head cool, their heart calm, and when all the plain is covered with the prostrate forms of the worshippers of the latest, or the most venerable, image of gold set up by some Nebuchadnezzar of to-day, or of the past, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego must stand erect, and perilously singular. In some circles the theological furnace perhaps, certainly in many the scientific fires, will be lighted, for the man who dares to "*flee from idolatry.*" [The charge of "Bibliolatry" is one which will be advanced or repudiated according to men's estimate of the Bible. It is only fair to those who are charged with undue deference to any *dictum* of the Book, or to any plain and fair consequence which may be drawn from such *dicta,* to say that, however much they may differ in their conception and statement of the degree and mode of God's activity in the production of the Bible, they agree in their aim to formulate and secure the absolute and final authority of God for its declarations and teachings. If they refuse to go behind the Book, it is only because they regard the Bible as in every part invested with the authority due to the mind and will of God Himself. They believe Him to have adopted, and to have made Himself responsible for, the whole Book, whatever be the literary, the historical, the mental, or moral processes by which the work of the human writers has reached its completed form. *On their hypothesis,* at all events, they cannot be charged with idolatry when they bow their own intellect, heart, will before the whole Word of God. They are worshippers, they would say,

not of the Book, but of its Author.] 3. *The idolatries of the house, of the family;* the "worship" of the husband or the child. Not all Abrahams [or all Sarahs] can put their Isaacs upon God's altar, or give them back into God's hands, without there being any subtle "idolatry" of the creature to stand discovered in, and by, the sharp trial to the parental heart. "Flee from"—be on the watch against—the idolatry which makes these in any degree or manner nearer than, higher than, God. No need not to love, warmly, devotedly; no need to reproach himself when, *e.g.*, the husband's heart feels keenly the severance from the wife. God gave the wife and the mutual love, and does not expect him not to feel, as he did not expect them not to love. Only the allegiance to God, and the interests of the spiritual life, must stand paramount.

"Have I with all my full affections
Still met the King? loved him next heaven? obeyed him?
Been, out of fondness, superstitious to him?
Almost forgot my prayers to content him?"
—*Queen Katharine of Aragon, in "Henry VIII.,"* Act iii., scene 1.

4. *Heart sins,* so "secret" (Ps. xix. 12) that the very soul itself hardly sees them "idols." "Flee"—cultivate a sensitiveness to the danger—"from idolatry." Sometimes an "idol" in the heart keeps the seeking soul from finding God's grace. There is an ostrich-policy that tries not to see, and then to think that, nothing seen, all is right. Not honest with itself, the soul turns away from even looking in the direction of the sin it means to keep, and, trying to forget it, offers to God the rest as "all." But the last and least idol must be sought out, and cast out! Men will keep the idol, but make compensation by giving, by charity, by church-building, or the like. Like Jonah's sailors, they will cast out their *goods*; anything, in fact, but their *gods*. The seeking soul must be sternly iconoclast in the temple within.

[Utilia:

(*a*) "Father, Thy will be done!
We know it is most loving, and most wise,
And yet we tremble lest Thou say, 'Arise,
That idol leave and come.'
Oh, should we then obey?
Or should we cling unto our shrine of dust?
Or should we follow but because we must?
Not loving Thy pure way?"
—*Sunday Magazine,* 1867, p. 428.

(*b*) "Ah, we are slow to learn, dull children all;
We see not and we hear not what we might,
We start and tremble when loud voices call,
When low ones whisper we neglect them quite.
Terror and love, all, all, are tried in vain,
And pass away like visions of the night;
We disregard the warning and the pain,
And clasp our hearts' poor idols with delight."
—*Dove on the Cross.*]

Ver. 15. "*Judge ye what I say.*"

I. **An inspired man here asks intelligent, candid examination of his words.**—1. *Paul is quite clear as to their absolute, "objective" authoritativeness,* as in xiv. 37: "If any man think himself . . . a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that *the things that I write* unto you *are the commandments of the Lord.*" Yet they make this appeal to the judgment for examination and reception. They were not to be challenged, indeed, or set aside, or even revised; yet they ask, claim, no acceptance resting on mere authority. They commend themselves to the truly "*wise*" man, as truth. The instinctive, revolting condemnation of the healthy moral sense that cries "*God forbid!*" is repeatedly Paul's only possible, or worthy, or necessary answer to opponents and their teachings. Dr. Martineau's purpose in, and use of, his words may not commend itself, but it is only an exaggeration of a truth when he says: "Second-hand belief, assented to at the dictation of an interested expert [N.B. this] without personal response of thought and reverence in myself, has no more tincture of religion in it than any other lesson learned by rote." He proceeds, however: "We never acknowledge [authority] till that which speaks to us from . . . a higher strikes home and wakens the echoes

in ourselves, and is thereby instantly transferred from external attestation to self-evidence. And this response it is which makes the moral intuitions, started by outward appeal, reflected back by inward veneration, more than egoistic phenomena, and turning them into correspondency between the universal and the individual mind, invests them with true authority" (*Seat of Authority*, Preface). One whose attitude towards an external revelation is far other than that of Dr. Martineau, Dr. South, says: "The surest ground that a man can have for believing anything is that he feels it in himself." The authoritativeness must in the first instance be external to the man; but the authority presents its credentials. These have several lines of verification, one being the correspondence of the teaching or the fact with demands of the moral sense.

2. *The moral sense must be kept in full health* by communion with God, or its "wisdom" is darkened, perverted, into folly. Obedience to known truth is a prime condition of further truth being given by the Holy Spirit. "If any man willeth to do His will, He shall know," etc. (John vii. 17, R.V.). The very credentials of Christ Himself would only appeal to the right heart: "He that is of the truth heareth My voice" (John xviii. 37), which is closely coincident in thought with Paul's words in the text. John viii. 43 means: "Ye do not understand this particular teaching which I am now uttering, because there is a deep, all-affecting ignorance in your heart; ye do not at all understand the dialect itself in which I always speak. Ye cannot judge what I say; ye do not possess the preliminary equipment for judgment, in an acquaintance with my language. I speak as to wise men." "Wisdom is justified by her children" (Matt. xi. 19 [N.B. var. reading], Luke vii. 35), and justifies herself to them. Coleridge: "In order to an efficient belief in [and knowledge of] Christianity, a man must be a Christian."

3. *The external authority must be kept first.*—In its most peremptory demand for acceptance and obedience Revelation never asks the acceptance of mere credulity. Miracles come primarily as facts of history, to be verified like any other fact of history. Yet there is a moral fitness about them; they are not mere marvels, to be "gulped down" with open mouth and closed eyes; they are parts of a coherent and self-consistent scheme. They are perfectly congruous with the assumed conditions of a Fall and a Redemptive History. Of this moral congruity the moral sense may judge, and it will take it as one of the necessary credentials of even the most abnormally "supernatural" fact. *Even the Bible says*, "*Judge ye what I say*," and awaits with even more than Paul's confidence the verdict. The Spirit in the Book, and the Spirit which enlightens and guides the judgment in the man, is One; the external and internal must coincide. Yet it does not tolerate challenge, revision, rejection. The closer investigation of the historical and literary phenomena of the process by which the Bible has come to be the One Book it is, must not, in announcing its resultant theories of "inspiration," leave out of account the age-long and accumulated suffrages of the verifying "*judgments*" of the most spiritual of every Church and century. In the reaction from an extreme, crudely stated theory of a quasi-mechanical dictation, extending in precisely similar manner and degree to every syllable and letter of the written text, the authoritativeness in, and the Divine responsibility for, every part must not be cast aside. "Judge ye what I say" cannot mean such a criticism as would accept one thing as Divine, authoritative, inspired, and dismiss another as merely human, a mistake, a fiction, if not a fraud. The effect is felt to be—and hence the prevailing unrest about the discussion—to change men's whole mental and practical attitude towards the Bible. It loses all authority. No book could

rule conscience or life, of which no man could be certain, or no two "moral judgments" agreed, as to what did or did not with authority express the Divine will. [If the captain follows the advice of the pilot only when he chooses, because he thinks it right or wise, unhappy the passengers!]

II. **The uninspired man ought to welcome and to urge this examination.** The "*wise*" man will exercise his "right of private judgment." 1. No Church may require of any man that anything should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation, which is not read in Holy Scripture, nor may be proved thereby (Ch. of Eng., Art. VI.). The experiment of pre-reformation ages, as of post-reformation ages, resulted in the conviction that the practicable, practical standard of appeal must be looked for outside all the varying human conditions of thought or varying moral enlightenment, or Church pronouncement. Everything—Church creeds, subjective moral pronouncements, the world's current maxims—all need to be checked by "*what is written*" (iv. 6). [Particularly when inferences are being drawn from perhaps scanty Scriptural *data*, and again inferences from those inferences, should these be frequently brought into comparison with the Scriptural standard. As the workman tests the rising building with repeated use of line and square; or as he repeatedly compares his more and more elaborated work with the pattern to which it is to be made conformable.] Better, safer, the aberrancies of private judgment than the slavery to human authority.

2. "*Come and see*" (John i. 39) is typical of a great principle. So He deals with seeking souls; so Philips should deal with the difficulties of Nathanaels (ver. 46); John in effect says to his disciples: "Go and see the Lamb of God for yourselves" (ver. 36). No man, uninspired, is to take away the telescope from the disciple and bid him believe what he says he himself sees with it; nor to permit the use of the telescope, on the one condition that the disciple only "sees" what his teacher tells him he ought to see. Rather he will give him free use of the telescope, and of his eyes, but will teach him to use it [as every astronomer knows, men *learn* to "see" better and better, with even the same instrument], and offer his own trained, expert knowledge for his assistance. When Paul, or Christ, or the Book, claims absolute unchallengeable authority, and we give it, we give it to God in them. [In Christ in a higher sense than in the others, of course.] Yet even God does not disdain to say, "*Judge ye what I say.*" [Cf. "Judge as to what I have done to My vineyard" (Isa. v. 3).]

3. *The preacher invites such spiritual judgment from the hearer.*—Dr. John Brown's father's preaching and religious life grew mellowed by the sudden sorrow of his wife's death. He preached at Galashiels before that change, when one "wife" said to her "neebor": "Jean, what think ye o' the lad?" "*It's maist o't tinsel-wark,*" said Jean. After it, Brown preached again at Galashiels. Jean, running to her friend, took the first word: "*It's a' gowd noo.*" (*Horæ Subsecivæ*, Second Series, p. 11, note.)

Ver. 27. "*If ye be disposed to go . . . eat.*"—Manifestly, from the whole drift of the chapter, this will be not to an idol feast, or even to a heathen civic banquet, but to a meal in a private house.

I. **Some intercourse with the world could not be absolutely prohibited.**—The Christian belongs to the world in many ways, and cannot choose but to take his part in social life. Many a family is itself traversed by the line of severance between "Church" and "world." It would be difficult to decide in many instances between the two. One of the best means of cultivating personal piety would be removed from the training of the Christian life; or, which is really the principal con-

'sideration, one of the main elements of hope for the world would be gone,—the presence in it of the "salt," the "leaven," the "light"; the world needs intercourse with the Christian. Moreover, Christ went to be a guest with a Pharisee, whose motive in inviting Him was scarcely friendly. He was Elisha, not Elijah, in this. He began His miracles at a wedding feast. Oddity is not necessarily holiness, nor singularity sanctity. "Eat;" *i.e.* if no principle be involved, do simply and naturally what others are doing. But take—

II. **Some cautions for such intercourse.**—1. *Do not give occasion there for your religion to be evil spoken of.* An unguarded word or look may make some younger guest to stumble. An inconsiderate use of one's abstract liberty [*e.g.* (in some circles) in taking wine, (in some), playing billiards] may create a difficulty to some "worldling" present, or be the occasion of a snare to a beginner in the new life. A wise circumspection will "take stock" of its company before indulging in a "throw off" which might be misrepresented or misunderstood. "Let your speech—even your fun—be always with grace, 'seasoned with salt.'" As the Christian profession becomes emphasised by (say) the holding of Church office, or by the ministerial character, so does responsibility increase and "liberty" become narrowed. The "representative" Christian should be most jealous over himself. Let him remember about the "*idle* word"—vapid, powerless, purposeless, at the best. The poor wine of such talk soonest turns sour!

2. *Remember, Christ went into such company as its Saviour.*—The physician may go, and may take risk, where an ordinary, "lay" person dare not and should not go. "What doest thou here, Elijah?" is as apposite a query for some Christians *in* the world, as for him, who was flying *from* "the world" at Samaria. Christ went as the physician into the house of the Pharisee, and *did the work* of a physician of souls *there.* Do you, when you get into unspiritual society? Do you even try? Ask, sometimes, when coming from such a "feast": "How did I entertain my companions? A whole evening; I a Christian; they unsaved. Not a word *for* God? Not a word *of* Him? Won't bear looking at in the light of my Master's example."

3. *Keep your own piety strong, healthy.*—You are in real danger there yourself. Further, it will give a reality and a power to any word you endeavour to speak for Christ in that circle. Live near to God, in fellowship with Christ, under the indwelling guidance of the Spirit; the Spirit will then give you the best guidance when to speak and what to say, and also when *not* to speak—when not to speak even for Christ. No general rule can be laid down in advance. He will, from one case to another, from one house to another, from one hour to another, save you from a "stiffness" which might repel, or a "lightness" which takes away all force from the words spoken; His indwelling will be the best Law and Guide in all sudden emergencies which may arise. Character, spirituality, will also *automatically* govern the lips and their least guarded utterances; spirituality of habitual tone, a devotional habit of soul, will "transpire" at many a trivial point, and will make even the protest of quiet separateness as lovable as the nature of the case will admit. Goodness will inevitably be singular and alone, sooner or later. But an unconscious goodness will have great power of winning appeal even to the unsaved.

4. *Yet why do you want to "go," or to "eat"?*—What does your being "*disposed to go*" reveal? Are you quite sure that it is a healthy disposition of heart or judgment?

## *HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.*

Ver. 11. "*The ends of the ages.*"

I. **The Divine superintendence of the ages.**—1. *God is in the history of them all.*—"No accidents in history;" no age, year, moment, event, dissociated from God. He is in all, originating the good, controlling the evil. ["*The King of the ages*" (1 Tim. i. 17), Greek.]

2. *God employs one age to benefit another.*—Nothing takes place for its own sake. The events that transpired in Arabia during forty short years, thousands of years ago, were to tell on the boundless future. [(1) We are heirs of all the ages.] (2) We are very incompetent judges of God's plan and action in the present age. (3) How serious life is. All full of God. All things flowing to the Eternal. Christ taught us that all the events of His providence are His advents. "Be ye therefore ready."

II. **The growing responsibility of the ages.**—Nothing to succeed this dispensation. In this age we have the advantage of the experiences and discoveries of past ages, in two ways: (1) Through literature; history gives us the intellect and wealth of the chosen people; the intellectual wealth and experience of all past ages meet in this. Consequently our responsibility is great. (2) Through influence; the mental influence streaming down regularly from sire to son. The Jews lived under moonlight; the first Christian, under the clear dawn of morning; it is high noon with us. We ought to be higher than the men of the past; we stand upon their life's work.—*Extracted and abridged from a sermon in "Homilist,"* vii. 188.

[**Utilia.**—1. When the Wesley monument in Westminster Abbey was uncovered, Dean Stanley thus used the fact of Wesley standing *on his father's grave* to preach: His work was not to be regarded as a new beginning; he stood upon the past of England and the English Church. 2. All stable progress holds to, and brings forward with it, the best in the old.]

Vers. 26, 28. Observe the divergent applications of the same great truth: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof."

I. **Eat**; raising no needless difficulty for your own conscience. "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."

II. **Eat not**; creating no avoidable difficulty for another conscience. A "*two-edged* sword," cutting the Gordian knot of this case of conscience.

Also: *The Great Proprietor.*

I. How indefeasible His right: He created, sustains, renews, blesses all.

II. How rich and diversified His property: the earth and its fulness [*i.e.* its contents].

III. How liberal and kind His use of it: He gives us all things, richly to enjoy.—[*J. L.*] [There is another "fulness" which is also at the service, and for the appropriation, of the Church (Col. i. 19, ii. 9, 10; John i. 14, 16).]

Ver. 31. "*All to the glory of God.*"—[Couple with this Col. iii. 17: "Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."]

I. "**What is the chief end of man?** To glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever." What a noble type of life, if sometimes rugged and stern, has grown up on this spiritual food! It has been the moral oatmeal, putting bone and resistant strength into the character.

II. 1. **How many things this excludes from a Christian life**; 2. **How many things this makes a Christian life include.**—1. Nothing may find place within the holy circle of a life "*in Christ*" which may not endure this test. Bring every proposal to this touchstone. Many a most tempting, most plausible, proposal will say, "*Sibboleth*," and must be cut off and slain, there and then! (Judg. xii. 6). A compendious rule, a "pocket" code,

for thousands of cases of every-day Christian morality. [If you suspect the draught of milk which the world or Satan proffers, drop this *lactometer* into it!] In Paul's present instance it means: "Try to avoid hurting a soul. Please men, if you can, even the heathen friend who invites you to his *feast*. But glorify God!" On the other hand, 2. (1) Aiming to glorify God, how much else you may glorify! Everything which, passing the examination of 1, may be rightly admitted into a Christian life, will receive a new touch of beauty and perfectness from this aim of the Christian heart. (2) Earth may thus anticipate heaven, where John "saw no Temple" (Rev. xxi. 22). Why? The Jerusalem he had known on earth boasted its Temple as its chief glory. The Heavenly Jerusalem has no such apparatus of a sinner's approach to God, and, moreover, no special, restricted, "sacred" area. As once the whole Temple court was hallowed, all made one vast altar, on any part of which sacrifice might be offered (1 Kings viii. 64), so now the city is all hallowed, the whole "new Jerusalem" is Temple floor. Its inhabitants in every detail of their life "live in the house of the Lord for ever" (Ps. xxiii. 6). (3) The day is come in the Christian man's life when "*Holiness unto the Lord*" is on the very "bells of the horses"; when not only is every "*pot*" in every housewife's kitchen in Judah and Jerusalem a holy thing, in which she may bring her offering, or receive her portion of peace offering meat from the altar; but the bells on the trappings of the chariot-horse may be as really holy as the golden frontlet-plate of the high priest's mitre. The bells do not draw the load, but they inspirit the horses and help them to draw; even as pleasure is distinct from the serious work of life, and yet finds a worthy function in helping men to bear the burdens and draw the loads of life. The sanctification of the bells is the sanctification of *pleasure* (Zech. xiv. 20, 21). (4) "The *form* of consecrating all human acts to God was already in use amongst the Jews, by whom, as now amongst Mussulmans, every act was performed 'in the name of God'" (Stanley). Cf. the old formula at the commencement of wills: "*In the name of God. Amen.* I, A. B.," etc. The earliest-known bill of exchange begins: "*In the name of God. Amen,*" and ends "*May Christ protect you.*" Mabillon, the French Benedictine and the historian of the Order, had special forms of prayer for entering on any new literary work, for use on receiving the first proof-sheet from the press, for the commencement of each day's studies. (Stephen, *Eccl. Biog.*, one vol. ed., 266.) In his later years Haydn's sheets of score were each headed, as he began to write a new one, "*Deo Soli gloria.*" (5) *The* very *physical life, in all its exercises,* may be thus *sanctified.* The very eating and drinking may be hallowed. Significant that the central ordinance of Christianity, one of its two pieces of original, simple, authoritative ceremonial, should be a Meal, a Supper. The very physical life finds its highest use at the Table of the Lord. [But this must not be exaggerated, as though the Supper were *merely* the highest example of the fellowship of a feast; or *merely* the sanctification of our common life.] All the "secular," natural life may as by a gracious upheaval of spiritual force be a land all uplifted to a higher level, and withal "tilted up" so that it lies ever toward its Sun—God Himself. And the eating and drinking at the Table of Christ the Lord are but a culminating peak where all life is now a high tableland. [George Herbert's poem *The Elixir* is all apposite: *e.g.*

> "A servant with this clause
> Makes drudgery Divine;
> Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws
> Makes that and th' action fine."]

[*Synopsis of Useful Passages* re *Temptation.*

**I. God tempts man.**—Gen. xx. 1,

Abraham; Deut. iv. 34, vii. 19, xxix. 3, the plagues, etc., connected with the Exodus.

II. **Temptation neutral or innocent.**—? Matt. vi. 13 (Luke xi. 4); Luke viii. 13, making the seed "fall away"; Gal. iv. 14, "my temptation which was in my flesh"; Jas. i. 12, "endureth temptation"; Luke xxii. 28, "continued with Me in My temptation," *i.e.* the time of His active ministry; Acts xx. 19, "serving God with many temptations," Paul; Jas. i. 2, "all joy"; 1 Pet. i. 6, "heaviness through manifold temptations"; 2 Pet. ii. 9, "deliver the godly out of temptation."

III. **Men tempt God.**—Exod. xvii. 2; Deut. vi. 16 (Ps. xcv. 8; Heb. iii. 9); Isa. vii. 12, "I will not tempt God"; Mal. iii. 13, 15; 1 Cor. x. 19; Num. xiv. 22, "tempted Me these ten times"; Acts xv. 10, "why tempt ye God?" Jerusalem council; Acts v. 9, Ananias and Sapphira.

IV. **Special phrases.**—"Enter not into" [evidently meaning more than "not be tempted"], Matt. xxvi. 41 and parallels; "rich fall into temptation," 1 Tim. vi. 9; "endureth" [emphasis on this; more than merely "suffers"; = "passes patiently and safely through"], Jas. i. 12 (1 Cor. x. 13); "led up of the Spirit into," etc., Matt. iv. 1 (cf. for thought, not word, "lead us not into temptation").

V. **Inquirers tempting Christ.**—Matt. xvi. 1, xix. 3, xxii. 35, etc.; Mark x. 2; Luke x. 25; John viii. 6.]

## CHAPTER XI.

### *CRITICAL NOTES.*

[Ver. 1 belongs to chap. x., where see. Evans (in *Speaker*), Stanley, and others divide this chapter at ver. 16, not ver. 17, making ver. 16 introduce the new topic.]

Ver. 2. **I praise you . . . all things.**—Not *qualified* or limited by ver. 17, which refers to a new point, which had arisen in practice, outside the "*all things* already *delivered*," whether orally, when Paul was at Corinth, or by the (possible) lost letter. Courteous, and no doubt true of the Church as a whole, though there were factious and rebellious exceptions. Certainly they deferred to his authority, when they submitted for his decision the questions the answers to which occupy so much of this letter. See also how this loyal feeling asserted itself in consequence of this letter (2 Cor. vii. 11 *sqq.*). **Ordinances.**—"*Traditions*" (R.V. and all Commentaries). "The delivered instructions, . . . directions in matters of discipline as well as of doctrine" (Evans). Ellicott suggests such (*esoteric*) topics as vi. 2; 2 Thess. ii. 5. Beet adds a new idea: "Probably the more or less definite instructions *given by Christ to the apostles* for the Church. Samples in ver. 23, xv. 3." Important to note (as Stanley): "Always delivered, not 'traditionally' through many links, but direct from the teacher to the taught." Hence entirely without analogy to the technical *traditions* of, *e.g.*, the Romish ecclesiastical theology: "Not merely such acts and words as were supposed to have descended from Christ and His apostles, although orally transmitted instead of recorded in writing; but also the whole circle of dogmas and practices which had been instituted by Church councils and recognised by the Church" (Luthardt, *Saving Truths*, lect. viii.); which became an authority concurrent with Scripture. All verbal or written Apostolic directions which are needed in order to a statement of God's will, complete for the purposes of Christian practice, have been put on permanent record in Scripture.

Ver. 3.—As to husband and wife and the illustrative force of their relationship, cf. throughout Eph. v. 22-33. There the stress lies upon their intimateness, their unity of relationship, and the obligation of mutual helpfulness and sympathy. In ver. 33 her subordination to him is introduced, and is here the prominent point dealt with. **Head.**—Above the Body (Col. i. 18), though, in a true sense, belonging to it; in close, living, life-giving union; directing it, and so every particular "*man*" in it. Man is woman's "*immediate* head" (Beet), for Christ is her head too; in the Body there is "no male nor female." Also distinguish between her equality and parallelism with man in her relation to Christ *in regard to her* personal

*spiritual life* (ver. 11), and her *social* subordination to man (cf. xv. 27, iii. 23). "The meaning of '*head*' must not be unduly limited or unduly extended. The general idea is that of *supremacy* or *pre-eminence*, but the particular character of that supremacy or pre-eminence must in each case be determined by the context and by the nature of the things specified. Thus, in the first member, [it] is in regard of nature and of headship of the whole human family; in the second, in regard of divinely appointed order and authority (Gen. ii. 22, 23, iii. 16; see below, vers. 8, 9); in the third, in regard of priority and office,—the pre-eminence of the Father, as Bishop Pearson says, 'undeniably consisting in this, that He is God not of any other but Himself, and that there is no other person who is God but is God of Him'" (Ellicott).

Ver. 4.—The Romans and Jews prayed with covered heads, the Greeks with uncovered. Hence no suggestion that the *men* at Corinth did draw over their heads any sort of covering, *e.g.* the loose lap or fold of the outer "wrap," like a Moorish *haik*. The Greek Christian would do by mere habit what profound Christian truth declared to be right for Jew or Gentile *men*. To cover his head was to assume openly the woman's condition of subordination, and to disavow his manly right to stand with unveiled face before Christ. He thus dishonours his head (*i.e.* his manly self, culminating there), and dishonours also that other Head in Whom he has, and to Whose work he owes, his own honour as a man.

Ver. 5. **Prayeth or prophesieth.**—Acts ii. 18, xxi. 9. In apparent contrast see xiv. 33. Sanctified good sense would draw a distinction between (say) a full, formal meeting of the whole Church for worship, where propriety dictated that she should ordinarily be silent, and smaller, half-social gatherings of Christian people in "prayer meetings"; or between her liberty at the family altar or in a gathering of women, and her seemly restriction in mixed or public gatherings. [Observe the antithesis, "*the men . . . the women*," in 1 Tim. ii. 8, 9.] In any case, whenever her praying is in any degree in public, let her not be "*unveiled*," unsexing herself and making herself "*masculine*," bearing herself like a short-haired man; she might as well go the whole length and be "*cropped*" [shorn] like a man. "Modesty is the conscience of the body." A Corinthian woman's veil would be the *peplum*, worn over the shoulders in the house, drawn over the face in public. [At Corinth a "shorn" woman would be a harlot.]

Ver. 7.—Note, not merely "*made in the image*"; he "*is the image and glory of God*." Note also, "*woman is*" [*not* "the image," but only] "*the glory of man*." She also—but the thought is outside of Paul's view here—is "man made in the image of God." "The male sex, as holding the highest power on earth and exercising undisputed sway over all else, is a visible pattern of God and a shining forth of His splendour" (Beet). Being what he is, man glorifies God Who made him thus; being what she is, woman glorifies man, to whom God has given her for a help-meet. The dependence found in both cases, of origin and relation, exalts and brings dignity to God and man respectively.

Ver. 10.—Very difficult text; a *crux interpretum*. (1) Pretty general agreement that "*power*" means her "*veil*," the sign of man's authority over woman. [Perhaps also: "It is a piece of natural fitness that nature herself should have put on the woman, in her long hair, a natural sign of subordination"; though this fits with still greater difficulty into the next clause.] (2) **Because of the angels.**—Choose between (*a*) "*Good* angels," present in the Christian assemblies, who will be grieved by anything disorderly or unseemly. In favour of this are: the far-fetched, obscure, precariously based, character of the argument involved in (*b*) below; the general use of Scripture, where "angels" means "good angels," unless the contrary is made clear in some way; the wide concurrence of the Greek Fathers in this interpretation; the constant assertion in the New Testament of the vivid interest which these take in all that belongs to man and his redemption. Also, the worshipping heavenly company, of which good angels form a large part, and the companies of earthly worshippers, are really one great body of worshippers at the same throne of the same God, though locally divided or distributed—part here, part yonder; the human worshippers must do nothing unworthy of the angelic part of the great adoring company. (*b*) "*Evil angels;*" as many, from Tertullian to Farrar, who suppose Paul to refer to [and believe in!] the Rabbinic interpretation of Gen. vi. 2. In favour of this are many Rabbinic sayings, and some fantastic Mahometan stories; against it, the consideration that a veil could hide nothing from spiritual beings, even though evil ones, and would neither defend the woman from their gaze nor shield them from temptation to which they might again at least desire to yield. To suppose that the veil is to defend the *good* angels [or the "angels of the Churches" (Rev. ii., iii.)] from temptation (!) is to suppose them "weaker, in the matter of sensual desire, than average Englishmen now" (Beet). [The matter is of very little homiletic use in any detail.]

Ver. 12.—*God's glory* is His creature, man; *man's glory* is his companion, woman; *woman's glory* is her covering, her hair and its symbolised modesty of subordination.

Ver. 16. **Seemeth.**—Not in the usual sense of the frequent translation of the Greek word, "*thinketh that he is*"; but, "is so pertinacious in disputing upon this point that, to put it kindly, he appears to others to contend, for the mere love of being in opposition. It would

be true to observed facts of human nature to translate and expound "thinks that he is, and is rather proud of being." **We.**—As distinguished from "*the Churches of God*," will mean "*we apostles*." **Custom.**—Viz. "of women praying with unveiled heads."

NEW TOPIC: THE LORD'S SUPPER AND THE LOVE-FEASTS.

Ver. 17.—*Backward* reference: *the directions just given*, and the general praise of ver. 2, are not to be taken to carry with them "*praise*" in regard to this further matter. Indeed, ver. 16 precludes it, for in this they are out of line with the holier manner and "*custom*" of other Churches. **Better . . . worse.**—"Not for edification and spiritual improvement, but the reverse."

Ver. 18. **First of all.**—Not formally completed by any "second" topic; perhaps ver. 34, "*the rest*," covers all Paul had in his mind when he here says "*first of all*." **In the Church.**—Of course not any building so called; only in "*due and formal Church assembly*." **Divisions** are again "*schisms*," as in i. 10 [though not necessarily here the Church parties; perhaps only divisions of feeling arising from diversity of wealth and social position], xii. 25. **Partly.**—Courteous, but serious; "charity *hopeth* all things."

Ver. 19. **Must.**—Not stronger than in (say) Matt. xviii. 7. "Fallen human nature being what it is, it is certain and inevitable that," etc. So, whether we shall say, "with the result *that*" or "in order *that*," goes down to the roots of things, as to the co-working of the free wills of God and of man. No doubt the Hebrew mind saw all history so full of God that it connected His will very closely indeed with the course of events, inclining always to "*in order that*"; to *ordaining* rather than merely *overruling*. A close parallel is in Matt. x. 34, 35. "*I am come . . . to send a sword*," "*to set . . . at variance*," etc.

Ver. 19. **Heresies.**—Not yet in the technical sense; only divisions arising out of the choice of self-willed hearts, showing itself in open unbrotherliness, dissension, division. **Approved.**—As usual (*e.g.* Rom. xvi. 10) those whom the testing shows to be the pure metal, genuine, true, loyal, to Paul, to the Church, to Christ. (2 Cor. x. 18, xiii. 7; Jas. i. 12.)

Ver. 20.—Cf. xiv. 23; Acts i. 15, ii. 44, iii. 1; quite general, perhaps including not only "*place*," but time and purpose. Choose between: (1) "Your way of doing things may be 'eating a supper,' but it is no '*Lord's* supper'"; and (2) "Such love-feast suppers as yours, conducted as they are, cannot suitably lead up to the 'Lord's Supper.' Decision turns upon the historical question whether the Lord's Supper itself was made a meal capable of (more than) satisfying hunger and including (even excessive and intoxicating, ver. 21) use of wine; or whether it was associated with (preceded by) such a substantial meal. Further—

Ver. 21.—Note, "*other*" is an insertion, depending in part for its warrant upon the decision as to the historical question. Choose between (1) "*Takes beforehand*, with a greedy eagerness which will not even wait for the whole company to be gathered and the proper *Church* ordinance to begin, but 'falls to' forthwith, so soon as the place is entered, upon 'its own supper,' brought to the feast"; and (2) "Takes first with selfish preference its own (rich man's) supper; whilst the poor man, with his poor and scanty supper, must wait the rich men's convenience and pleasure before partaking of anything they had professed to bring towards a communion meal."

Ver. 22.—Either way, the communion idea is sinned against and lost. "Hungry" and "drunken" sit side by side at the Lord's table! Private meals should be eaten in private houses; natural hunger and thirst should be satisfied at home. [The historical questions involved are most variously decided upon, sometimes under (unconscious) theological bias. The facts are few; their interpretation is often still *sub lite*. (*E.g.* some would make the edict of Trajan [112, or earlier] occasioned by the well-known letter of Pliny the Younger,—that the "simple and harmless" meal of the Bithynian Christians, taken in the evening of the Lord's Day, should cease,—the occasion of the disuse of the Love-feast, and of a morning use of the [distinctive] Lord's Supper. But it is not agreed that the meal which he forbade was really taken in the evening, at a second meeting, in addition to the morning one which he so fully describes.) For homiletical purposes one important point is clear: the ordinance is to every participant's thought and apprehension a Supper set out upon a Table. Whatever other meanings might lie latent—or even then be understood—in the eating of bread and wine together at Christ's supper table, it was certainly a Meal, not without analogies to the feats in heathen temples, or to the Jewish peace-offering banquets, or (more appositely) to the actual "last supper" of Christ. The analogy of this last may lend some support to the frequent exposition of vers. 17-20, that an ordinary meal (in part also reminiscent of the early community in Jerusalem, Acts ii., iv., vi.) *preceded* the more definite "*Supper*," as in Christ's own instance. Without insisting too strongly upon "*we* break" (x. 16) or "*every one* taketh" (ver. 21), it is also clear that this, like many more things in the Church, has not yet attained to much definiteness of form and manner of observance; there is little or no "rubric" as yet; differentiation of officials, and between Love-feast and Supper, is only in an *inchoate* stage.]

Ver. 23. **Received.**—Two interpretations: (1) "Hearsay" theory; (2) "Inspiration" theory.

(1) supposes from, *e.g.*, Peter during the fortnight of Gal. i. 18, and asks where the necessity was of any independent narrative, straight from the risen Christ to Paul; (2) Evans (*in opposition to Meyer*) insists upon the meaning of the Greek for "*of*," though this again need not necessarily imply *oral* communication from Christ to Paul. At all events, (2) is preferable, and gives an independent, original account (which may have influenced the closely similar one in Luke xxii. 19 *sqq.*) of the institution of the Supper. **I also delivered.**—The two links in the chain, "*received*," "*delivered*," solemnly certified and vouched for as being duly in order. Note, "*I delivered . . . was being delivered.*" **Bread.**—A cake of bread, a loaf; one of those lying on the table, so far as appears.

Ver. 24.—Note the shortened, correct reading (seen in R.V.). Therefore "*broken*," though true and suggested by the facts, does not exhaust the significance for His people's life and salvation of the fact that He had a real human body. Still, this "*broken*" is the pre-eminent serviceableness "*for you*" of His having become an incarnate Saviour. **This do.**—Viz. "*Take, give thanks, break,* [*take, eat,*] as I have done, in remembrance of **Me**." Himself, in all the developing discoveries of their reverent, Spirit-guided inquiry, is to be the object of thought and faith.

Ver. 25. **In like manner.**—Viz. *Taking, giving thanks,* and *giving to them.* Observe this was "*after supper*"; the bread apparently being "*during* supper." The "Last Supper," then, would not set a very close precedent for any (assumed) sequence of definitely distinguished Agapæ meal and Lord's Supper. **Is.**—Spoken of "the cup"; *the Cup IS the Covenant*; exegetical of "*is*" in ver. 24. **This do ye.**—As in ver. 24. Peculiar to this narrative, in connection with the *cup.* **As oft as.**—Contemplates the continuance of the ordinance. [Are we to prefer, as verbally more exact, this particular record of Christ's words over the bread and over the cup?]

Ver. 26.—Communion (x. 14-21); Covenant (ver. 25); now also Commemoration. (For this and other points, see Separate Homily on ver. 20.) *Until He come* "to be Executor as well as Testator" (Evans).

Ver. 27.—With no "*worthy*" appreciation of its meaning, or, this appreciated, with no care to behave in a manner "*worthy*" of what he believes, and of what the Supper is, **Guilty of.**—A fourfold use of the Greek word in New Testament; see (1) Heb. ii. 15. "*subject* to bondage"; (2) Mark iii. 29, "*guilty* of eternal sin"; (3) Matt. xxvi. 11, "*guilty of* death"; (4) here, approximating to (2). Held bound to the responsibility for the act, and to pay the penalty of it; in this case, of dishonour done to Christ, almost in the manner of the apostates in Heb. x. 29—"hath counted *the blood of the covenant* . . . a (merely) common thing." If the Corinthians evacuated the ordinance of its high and holy meaning, they made the bread and wine only the historical reminders of a malefactor who once was (perhaps justly) crucified outside the walls of Jerusalem. What was this but to assent to His crucifixion—in fact, to "crucify Him afresh"; as He deserved, if He be not a Saviour Whose Supper has the full significance which Paul has expounded.

Ver. 28. **So.**—*I.e.* having examined ["*proved*," cognate with "*approved*" (ver. 19)] his heart, and his intention in partaking of the Supper; then, with all the personal unworthiness he no doubt discovers, but with a real desire to use the Supper as the Lord intended, "*let him eat.*"

Ver. 29. **Damnation.**—"Judgment," "condemnation"; but these also include, not only the verdict upon the sinner, but the penalty. At Corinth this last was sickness, and in many cases death (ver. 30). (Cf. Acts v. 5, xiii. 11.)

Ver. 31.—R.V. shows the verbal connection with ver. 29. When will we choose to have ourselves appraised, and our true position and character estimated? Now, or at "the Day"? And by whom—ourselves, or the Judge? Punishment now is chastisement, which may chasten the "worldliness" out of our heart and thought, so that we shall not come into the world's irreversible condemnation. ["He (Noah) condemned the world," Heb. xi. 7.]

Ver. 33.—Coming back to, as it might seem, the trivial piece of unseemly disorder out of which all this solemn profanity arose, with its sad sequel of punishment; disorder which also was *symptomatic* of their moral blindness to the meaning of the Supper.

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 2—16.

*The Women's Veils.*

I. "**Solemn trifling**," cries somebody, "to think of putting these *nugæ Paulinæ* on permanent record as a piece of God's revelation!" But in God's works, and in God's words, we are no competent judges of what are *nugæ.* This a sample case of how to deal with and decide the many small points of Church order and worship; *e.g.* such as, in mission-fields, or in communities for the first time becoming organised and civilised on Christian lines, often get an

accidental significance and importance. As the same "laws" give shape to a globe and a rain-drop, so the same great principles apply to and regulate the gravest or the most trivial matters of Christian practice. There is no limit, upward, or *downward*, to the concern God takes in whatever bears upon His redeeming work for the race of mankind. Everything connected with His Church may be brought to some of the **tests suggested here.**

II. 1. **Customary observance and Church rule.**—There is a power in the very idea of a Great, Whole Community feeling its oneness, and showing it, by some observance which is its universal badge and token. *E.g.* the eating of bread and the drinking of wine at a supper in connection with the death of Christ and the Christian covenant, and in faith and hope of His second coming, is everywhere—amidst all the varieties of ritual and interpretation—a *differentiating* custom, as between Christian and non-Christian; a *uniting* custom, as between Christian and Christian of all types, and creeds, and ages, and lands. The Church *sees* its oneness at the Table. This indeed is no custom of optional observance. But, to take another, not thus binding: For centuries, almost as far back as the very beginning of the Church, there has never been a day on which, somewhere, Christian voices have not uplifted Psalm xcv. to God in public worship. The sections of the Christian Church are far enough removed from each other; in doctrine, in practice, very often in spirit also, they have been as widely sundered as they could well be, to belong to the same Body at all. Yet in the use of this psalm one common life thrills through from Church to Church. The diversities and divisions are real and deep, but they do not destroy the unity, deepest when all are at worship. Thus, then, when Churches which as separate communions are but of yesterday, sing this psalm, which has been interwoven for ages with the prayers and praises of the Churches of, at all events, all Western lands, hoary some of them with the associations of ages, the gulf of time is bridged over by the "*custom*"; the Church of the present avows its oneness with the Church of the past, and each Church claims its place in the great company of the *Christian* worshippers of the One God and Father. [The unity of worship even goes further. The Jew in his Friday evening synagogue service begins his Sabbath worship with this same psalm.] This is poetry, sentiment; but any thing which manifests, and makes real, the sense of unity is not lightly to be regarded. That woman, that Church, would be ill-advised who went in the face of the "*custom*" of all the Churches of Christ. If the uncovered head for the man, and the veiled head for the woman, be the universal *Christian* custom, that is worth something as a test by which to decide such a question as had been raised at Corinth. [So Burial—not necessarily *Interment*—*v.* Cremation.] Christian custom should prevail, as against personal "fad" or the freak of undisciplined individuality. If there be no good reason against, "fall into line" with the universal Church. *And this the more when there is reason as well as custom in the practice.*

2. **Universal instinct of propriety** as against any unnatural, perverted, temporary fashion, or the "crank" of some "*contentious man*," fond of, glorying in, being "on the other side," and in a minority—himself against the world. "Propriety," indeed, may in regard to some points be read in the most opposite senses. To the Jew it means that a man cover his head with his hat, or turban, or *tallith*, when he prays. And that Jew would be censurable who in the synagogue, in mere freak or self-willed preference of his own course [= "*heresy*," ver. 19], should go against the received proprieties of the place and of his co-religionists by praying with bared head. ["In your prayers, in Churches and places of Religion, use reverent postures, great attention, grave ceremony, the lowest postures of humility; remembering that we speak to God, in our reverence to whom we cannot possibly exceed; but that the expression of this reverence

be according to the law or custom, and the example of the most prudent and pious persons; that is, let it be the best of its kind to the best of essences" (Jeremy Taylor, "*Holy Living*," ii., § 5).] But there are "proprieties" which are universal. The modesty which is the body's conscience may, like the sense of sin which belongs to the soul's conscience, be so violated and sinned against that it seems gone; but it is there, ineradicably deep in human nature, and can be awakened and appealed to in all. Nature has a voice, and can be heard speaking in her very physical differencing of the sexes. Long hair for the woman, shorter for the man; this is not fashion, it is of no one age or nation. "Fall then into line with" Nature in your rule for Church order. "Your Jew and your Roman covers his head when he worships. He does not understand, as you Christians do, the headship of man in and with Christ. But even he does not tolerate that his women should worship with uncovered head." Paul's principle appeals to the universal womanly instincts and fine perceptions. In extraordinary circumstances a woman, like Philip's daughters, may "*prophesy*"; the *gift* brings with it its own *call* for exercise, and overrules many prudential or conventional considerations. In quasi-domestic life she may "*pray*" (ver. 5) openly and as the leader of the devotions of others. But the proprieties as well as the custom of the Churches will make this the exception (xiv. 33), only to be departed from under the clearest necessity. Woman's place and work and open participation in the conduct of worship are all to be decided and adjusted in conformity with this second test. A local impropriety at Corinth made a "*shorn*" head, or uncovered, "*a shame*" to a woman. Even this local conventionalism must not needlessly be offended against by a Christian woman anxious to assert her equality with the men as before Christ. Even the Gentiles must be "*pleased*," if possible (x. 32). And in many another small detail of Church order, an instinct which works for fitness and propriety is a criterion not to be left unused. The "*angels*," too, have their sense of fitness which should have consideration. But this belongs rather to the next criterion.

3. **Revealed truth** is, however, the supreme standard of appeal. Where there are no express directions there may be exemplar facts. There may be "leading cases," each of them carrying a principle. Yet example, even Apostolic example and practice, if certainly established, is not necessarily Church law, unless the apostles have made it so. [An argument often urged in the controversy *re* Episcopal *v.* Presbyterian system of government.] The Apostolic example may sometimes be more honoured in forsaking the literal and exact and mechanical copying of it, whilst seizing the essential principle and adapting its form and embodiment to the changed environment and necessities of a new time or a new world. The true law may lie deeper than the letter of their practice. But any practice of theirs put on permanent record in the Scripture is, with this proviso, legislation and Divine direction for the Churches (ver. 16, "we *have no such custom*"). The histories of the Bible are didactic; they may be legislatory also; they are parts of the revelation, one of the methods of the revelation, of the mind and will of God. Nature, with its long and short hair for the two sexes—how comes it thus? Who made "Nature"? Who made such a detail of "her" arrangements so significant? How has it happened that "a mere resultant of the processes which have evolved *sex*" is ethical, and finds something innate in man and woman responsive to its dictate? "*All things of God*" (ver. 12). Go back to Eden and the Creation story. See the finished work of the creative "week" (vers. 7-11):—

> "Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,
> Godlike erect, with native honour clad,
> In naked majesty, seemed lords of all,
> And worthy seemed; for in their looks divine

The image of their glorious Maker shone,
Truth, wisdom, sanctitude, severe and pure,
Whence true authority in men ; though both
Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed ;
For contemplation he and valour formed ;
For softness she and sweet attractive grace ;
He for God only, she for God in him :
His fair large front and eye sublime declared
Absolute rule ; and hyacinthine locks
Round from his parted forelock manly hung
Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad ;
She, as a veil, down to the slender waist
Her unadornèd golden tresses wore
Dishevelled, but in wanton ringlets waved,
As the vine curls her tendrils, which implied
Subjection, but required with gentle sway,
And by her yielded, by him best received,
Yielded with coy submission, modest pride,
And sweet, reluctant, amiable delay."

—*Paradise Lost*, iv. 288-311.

Not in this particular case only, but in all, let men get back to God's facts; let them dig down beneath the accretions of speculation, or fashion, or error, until in God's own utterance of His will, above all in Revelation, they get to rock. In everything, not, "What thinkest thou?" but, "What seest, hearest, *readest*, thou of the works of God?" That only is final; the supreme arbiter of all, whether in actual use or only proposed, in connection with the order of the Church or the life of His people. [Revelation and propriety combine in the appeal made by Paul to the presence of angelic spectators, who are also, as is suggested in Critical Notes, co-worshippers in the great company of adoring ones to which believers "*are* come" already (Heb. xii. 22), and with which in a glorious reality they are already associated in the one joint homage of Heaven and Earth. But so obscure is the whole matter, so small a corner of the veil is drawn back, so momentary and partial is the glimpse we get of these angelic critics of the proprieties of Christian observance and worship, that very little practical use can be made of the motive Paul appeals to. We dare take in the obscurity no step, except the one we here take with our inspired guide, in the unfamiliar world within the veil, where we have, indeed, planted our foot, but we hardly know what it is we see. Yet more thought and honour might perhaps be paid to the "big brothers" told off, "sent forth," to take charge of us (Heb. i. 14), without our running into all the fanciful, Rabbinic, and apocryphal poetising about each man's "guardian angel," and the like.]

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 17—34.

[The specific subject of the section is dealt with under ver. 20. A general grouping of the many topics may be made around three *nuclei* of arrangement. Thus :—]

I. **Evil mingling with good.**
II. **Good arising out of evil.**
III. **A good thing—only, and of many-sided good.**

I. **Their assembling for public worship**, and even their "*coming together*" for "*the Supper of the Lord*," issues in evil, not in help to man or glory to God,—"*not for the better, but for the worse.*" The fires of party "*divisions*," always smouldering in the hearts of fellow-Corinthians, and fellow-Christians, are stirred into a fierce blaze so soon as they find themselves together within the same place of assembly, and are made to burn intensely by the behaviour of some of the rich towards the poor, as they sit down for the holy feast. Thus

the place and the worship and its central ordinance—that which above all should be the sign and the bond of "*communion*"—are profaned, and the crucified Lord, Whose broken *body* and Whose poured-out *blood* they profess thankfully to remember as the foundation of all their common hope, is dishonoured. Can there be no "truce of God" from their "*divisions*" there, where of all other places should be peace? Is the distinction between rich and poor to be offensively obtruded, and their poverty flung in the faces of the poorer saints [? even "houseless" ones (ver. 22)] at that table where one ["wedding garment" of] undistinguishing redeeming love invests every guest alike, and covers and hides all such social rank and distinction? If there be one occasion in which should stand out conspicuous that glory of the Church of Christ as the home of all comers, of all races, ranks, ages, of both sexes, all sinners, all adopted children of God, alike,—it should be at the Table of their common Elder Brother. To accentuate there the inevitable social distinctions of the secular life outside—there, of all places—is the offence against the brotherhood the grossest; there, of all places, is the "*worldliness*" of such hearts shown up most staringly as sin against the Lord and Host of the Feast. How utterly "*unworthy*" is such "*eating and drinking*"! Do they, no better than that, "*discern*" and discriminate and judge between the covenant supper, where the Lord Himself is the true Passover Lamb, and the common meal in their own houses? Or, indeed, are they as heathenish still as those who eat at the table "*of idols*," "*of devils*"? If their partisanship thus sins against the very idea of the unity; if their offensive flouting of the hungry poor of Christ's flock by their greedy, selfish haste to demolish the heap of provisions they have brought to the common table, thus sins against the brotherhood; if such utter unpreparedness of heart and thought thus sins against the very Lord Himself, around whom they "*come together*,"—is it any wonder that His "*judgments*" are abroad amongst them? Any wonder that their very eating and drinking thus only brings "*condemnation*" upon them? Any wonder that sickness is abroad, and that even the "*sleep*" of death has fallen upon some most conspicuous offenders? They did not connect the disorder and the deaths? They did not trace any connection between the prevalent sickness and the "*undiscerning*," "*unworthy*" communicating? Very likely not. "*The world*" never does. It stops at natural causes; had perhaps its (crude) sanitary theory of the epidemic sickness at Corinth; could perfectly account for every death in the membership; knew exactly what had carried off each particular man or woman. If they shared in the ignorance of the undiscerning "*world*" which does not see God in such things, and in the practical heathenism which made the gathering nothing but "a guild supper," such as abounded around them, was it any wonder that they were "*condemned with the world*"? (ver. 32). "*They come together*," indeed, "for *the worse*." A Church in Corinth not three years old, a Church of Christ not fifty years old, and its most solemn assemblings have here come to this! Evil springing up amidst the good! "The world is out of joint!"

II. **Good springing out of evil,**—1. Just as these two consummately important and valuable Epistles have found their occasion, if not their cause, in these miserable factions and these shocking disorders in the Corinthian Church. "All things have indeed thus worked together for good," for the Church of all lands and of all ages. The apologist of to-day comes to these two Epistles for his weapons of defence, for his facts of cogent significance and value (*e.g.* chap. xv.). The theologian comes to them for full and explicit and far-leading revelations of truth upon some of the deepest themes of the Christian faith. The humble believer finds every line in some pages full of "meat to eat" that the world, and even some of the apologists and theologues, "know not of." How great is the worth to the Church of this earliest-written account of the Lord's last supper, of

His own solemn expository words of institution, and those derived from the Lord Himself. And yet Paul rises to this universally precious, monumental, declaration and testimony, from the temporary and local and personal. Dictated to his amanuensis as he sat working at his trade in some humble lodging in Ephesus, there falls from his pen a palmary document of the Christian faith: "*received of the Lord, delivered unto*" the truly Catholic Church! "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Him!" (Ps. lxxvi. 10). "The world is out of joint" indeed; God's fair order is sadly disturbed and marred. But every man can see, and can say, "He meant it not so; He Who did so much that was manifestly intended to work for good, never left His work so nearly finished and yet so mischievously incomplete, so admirably designed and yet so imperfect in its actual working." And the wondering, grateful heart of His Church sees in a thousand instances God's self-vindication for those who have hearts to feel its force and open eyes to see its facts; how He makes evil the seed-plot from whose very bosom good springs up; how not only parallel with evil, but occasioned by it, and helped forward by it, there arises the good. It is God working toward the restored order, the "restitution of all things" (Acts iii. 21), towards which the most potently effectual contribution are the Redemption and the Church in whose midst is the significant Supper so profaned at Corinth. In ver. 19 is a particular example of the working of this ceaseless drift and movement of the Divine government of the world towards "restitution" of the disturbed original order. It reads strongly: "*There must be heresies . . .* **in order that.**" How and where do the Human and the Divine meet and work together? Who can tell? There is a Holy of Holies of secrecy within which the most adventurous human inquiry or analysis or speculation have never yet been able to set foot. [Kindred with the question: "How and where do the Material and the Spiritual meet in Creation; *e.g.* in the chemistry, and the mechanics, and the mathematics, which are inwrought into the very structure of the natural world?"] In the Incarnation, for example? In Inspiration, for example? In the Answer of Prayer? And, as here, in the Providential rule of the will of God over, and in, and through, creaturely wills, created by Himself as free as His own? It is one and the same problem, worked with many sets of *data*, and insoluble for the same reason in each particular case. Approach the meeting, the midway, reconciling point from one side, and all is Man, his free activity, his passions, his plans, his limitations, his sins; so much Man that there seems no room—naturally, intellectually, morally—for God. Approach from the other, and all is God; so entirely God that it is difficult to find room for man's freedom of thought and action, and for his responsibility or guilt. Yet it is noteworthy how seldom the heart raises or feels the difficulty. To the, not all unintelligent, bulk of God's people, the every-day working hypothesis of life includes both: "Much is of man; all is of God." The speculative difficulty is felt now and again, but the combination of man and God which defies intellectual analysis is a working principle which as a matter of fact does serve for the practical need of life. [How many readers, for example, or how many Jerusalem Christians in (say) A.D. 67 or 68, ever stopped to find any speculative difficulty in their Lord's command, "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter"? And yet how many lines of military, and political, and domestic plan and arrangement must converge; how many "accidents" of the weather, of the year, of the month, of the week; of the longer or briefer resistance of an army or a city, advancing or retarding the march of a general, and opening or closing the gates of a city; must concur—with chances simply infinite, mathematically calculated, against all the needed elements of a secure flight, in mild weather, to an open Pella of refuge, being found in combination—in order that the prayer might be answered.] "*In order that*" is for the understand-

ing a problem of bottomless darkness, here and in all similar cases. But we do see a little way down. If we cannot always dissect out and exhibit in their distinctness Purpose and Result, we are oftentimes moved to deep and thankful wonder as we see *Good resulting from Evil.* For example:

2. *Open evil keeps good on the alert.*—If only the Adversary were absolutely wise, he would oftener see that the game to play if he would win, is that of the subtle veiling of evil. The man, or the Church, that can, and does, "withstand" and struggle nobly and victoriously "in the evil day" (Eph. vi. 13), often needs the emphatic caution, "*And having done all*, to stand." When Evil has drawn off its beaten forces from the field, and the hard-pressed victor for faith, or principle, or public morality is breathing hard but freely, now that there seems a moment's leisure, then is the need that watchfulness shall not be relaxed the greatest. It is not the evil which stands revealed as a "heresy," from which a Church has most to fear, but that which puts on the guise of the most perfect congruity with the highest aspirations and work of a Church, or which robes itself in some innocent or friendly phraseology. Troy is still captured by the harmless horse of wood, which forsooth "is really a thing devoted to the patron god of Troy!" The world and its mischief are often hidden away in the harmless, innocent piece of "politic concession" to the needs of the age, or to the necessities of the young people "whom we must keep with us, you know"; in the offered assistance to the activities of the Church, which though not exactly claiming to be "Christian," really "is working, you see, towards the same end as yourselves." "Let us help you," said the enemies of Jerusalem in the days of Zerubbabel, "to build your temple; we seek your God as ye do" (Ezra iv. 2). Zerubbabel and Jeshua would have no such "help"! The alliance, not the "*heresy*," is to be feared. The "*heresy*" means that the uniforms of the opposing ranks are become more distinctive. When Confederate and Federal troops could hardly tell by speech or uniform whether friend or foe was stealing upon them and emerging from the mist, then was the peril of surprise and snatch-defeats. So again:

3. *Defections and desertions have benefited the Church.*—Such defections *stiffen* faithfulness; not by provoking any mere dogged "*other-side-ishness*," but by leading to heart-searching as to personal loyalty or unfaithfulness, to truth and Christ, by inducing new consecration on the part of the "*approved*" ones, by occasioning new inquiry into the meaning and worth of what is being assailed and defended. The diminished numbers close up their ranks and feel themselves the fitter for the fight. [See how, at the supper table, Christ Himself "opened up" to the "*approved*" eleven after Judas had withdrawn, as if even He breathed more freely where now all were faithful. "*Now* is the Son of Man glorified," etc. (John xiii. 31). The underlying idea of "*approved*" is well expounded *e converso* in 1 John ii. 19: "[The many antichrists] went out from us that they might be made manifest that they were not of us." The deep essential cleavage which all along had divided the Church stood revealed. It was seen that they who were not for Christ were against Him. They stood out ἀδόκιμοι, "*reprobate*," sifted out from the "*approved*," the δόκιμοι. In this instance the separation is made manifest by the secession of the antichrist party. In 2 Tim. ii. 19, 21 the secession is to be the action of the faithful party. Two "*heretics*"—where the word is beginning to take on its later ecclesiastical colour and associations—are specified, Hymenæus and Philetus. They had gone greatly wrong in doctrine (ver. 18), and perhaps also in morals (ver. 16); they were heretics who at least tended to become "ungodly," immoral, heretics. They had gone out from the Church, or had been cast out; or, if not so much of separation had yet taken place, their "error" (ver. 18) ranged them as not really belonging to the Great House. They had never really belonged to it, or

had ceased to do so. It was only a human reckoning, which was originally imperfect, or which had become so by their falling away in doctrine and heart, that had accounted them so. Either man's hasty work had built in stones which never were "living stones," or they had ceased to "live," and so fell out from their place in the living temple, the "spiritual House," to which they had ceased in any true sense to belong (1 Pet. ii. 4, 5). So far as they had any connection with the Great House, it was that of "vessels unto dishonour"—[not *made to be broken* in pieces; what house has any such?],—the "vessels" which are needed to carry away from the house its sweepings and gathered impurities. [The heavenly Jerusalem, like the earthly; the Church, like the literal city; have their Gehenna outside the walls (Matt. xiii. 41). In the history of Churches, and of The Church, it is simple matter of observation that from time to time evil, error, disorder, and wilful, self-pleasing teaching seem to have gathered and gravitated toward some "vessel unto dishonour." In some secessions—"heretical" or other—it has seemed as if the leaders have carried away with them the elements of turbulence and scandal. They have done good, indirectly. The vessel which carries away what cannot longer, for health or happiness, be suffered in the house, serves a useful turn. The Church has been left united, cleared in doctrine and life, purer and at peace, its "*approved*" ones "*appearing*" such to all.

4. It is an extension of the same principle to say that *heresies* (in the technical sense, not in Paul's sense here) *have served the good end* that what is "*approved*" *truth* has stood out in clearer light and appreciation. The early Church found itself occupying its heritage of Truth, much as some pioneer settlers in a new land may plant themselves in the midst of a vast, vague territory whose limits are not easy to define; nor for a little while does any necessity to define them seem to press upon them. But as neighbours come and plant themselves in the same region, "Mine and Thine" must needs be ascertained and marked off. Sometimes claim is set up or occupation attempted where the first comer believes that he has already exclusive right. With much discussion, perhaps with more than a little of heat and temper, the matter is threshed out, and at last a boundary-mark is planted where the verdict determines that rightful Occupancy and wrongful Claim are parted. In the end the process has been repeated on all sides, until the original seat of our settlers is girdled with a series of boundary-posts, which have become a complete definition of their holding. So, beginning with a body of truth rather held experimentally than formulated for the intellect, the Christian Church had from time to time to investigate the claim, the pretension, of this teaching or that to be part of the Truth; and so, very often with heat and struggle, it became clear that thus far was Truth, beyond was Error; on this side and on that, in this direction and in that, the boundary-marks got planted, until a definition of doctrine more or less complete was arrived at. [*E.g. truly* God, *perfectly* man, *without confusion* two natures, *without division* one person, are four such boundary-posts, marking the limits within which the truth that takes in all the facts and declarations of Scripture has been ascertained to lie, and beyond which lie "heresies" in the ecclesiastical sense; sometimes imperfect or crude attempts after truth, which have overstated one aspect of the whole, or have omitted some of the *data* for determining the whole.] Heterodoxy has cleared Orthodoxy. The "heresies" have necessitated the Creeds. "*That they which are approved*"—the truths which have endured the scrutiny and the test and the fire of discussion and controversy—"*may be made manifest among you.*" An accommodation of Paul's *word*, "*heresy*," of course; but a legitimate application of the *principle* of the sentence.

III. **Good, and only good.**—1. How restful the atmosphere of these verses

(23-25). We are escaped where God "hides His people in a pavilion from the strife of tongues" (Ps. xxxi. 20); escaped from the noisy factions of Corinth into the calm of the upper room in Jerusalem, where every word of the Master of the Feast seems to come from within the penumbra of that Shadow which is creeping over His path, and into whose inmost darkness He will enter on the following day. Sitting at table in full health, He talks to His fellows at the table of His blood, the price, the pledge, of a "*new*," better "*covenant*." Still with them, He speaks of the days when it shall be "*remembrance*," not "enjoyment," of His presence, of Himself; as if with the accent of a dying parent or friend, giving last injunctions, and making, with a calmness hardly shared by any who stand around the bed, the little final arrangements for the days when all is over and he is gone. Still living, still the Teacher and Friend in their midst, yet His own hands give out and distribute "*His body*," the body of a true Passover Lamb,—a Sacrifice of redemption and deliverance, the Provision of a Supper whose strength shall be for the pilgrimage of God's new, ransomed Israel. To these men, who had once heard Him declare Himself the true, the original, the archetypal "Bread from Heaven" (John vi.); and who had seen, and shared in, the hushed perplexity with which men that morning listened in the synagogue of Capernaum, and at last said, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"—to these He says, "*Take, eat.*" 2. "*As oft as ye shall drink it*"; His words look forward through the long vista of years before His Church, as, each time they sit down at His table, they look backward down the years. "He is with them always,—all the days." The Supper board is never spread but He takes His place as the Head of the table. [As He who sat quietly eating, the invited guest in the inn at Emmaus, suddenly, significantly, took *their* bread into *His* hands, and did the host's part, blessing and breaking, and vanishing! (Luke xxiv. 30, 31). See Appended Note.] 3. And they are not to allow the simple feast to be dissevered from Himself, and their grateful, believing "*remembrance*" of His whole work. "*As oft as ye do this, do it in remembrance.*" No other meaning is to be attached to, to be accreted round, the simple arrangement; Himself, their "communion" in Him, "the covenant in His blood,"—these are to be "*remembered*," not repeated, nor extended, nor forgotten. They may institute, may disuse, [like Moravians and Methodists] may restore, love-feast suppers in the Churches, as matters of prudential, profitable arrangement and order; simple fellowship meals. But only He can institute in "*remembrance*"—in this fullest sense—a supper; and so long, so often, as they profess to continue His supper, they must always take care that this significance is attached to it. It must not be so stripped of meaning that it becomes only the simple love-feast, or the sub-Pentecostal common table of the Christian brotherhood. 4. Only He could institute it, and only He can abolish it. There will be a last celebration of the Lord's Supper, somewhere, somewhen. How happy that company "eating and drinking" when the Son of Man comes,—by His lightning-sudden appearing breaking in with startling abruptness upon all the medley of human employment (Matt. xxiv. 38),—if they are "*eating and drinking*" at His table; a celebration of "the Lord's Supper" interrupted by the coming of the Lord! And even then the fit word will hardly be "abolish." The analogy of the creation history, and of the redemption history, in the past will again be followed, and the only abolition will be that of the temporary, accidental clothing of the Idea. The "Lord's Supper" is but one form of, one testimony to, the Communion between God and man in Christ, towards which "*the ages*" (x. 11) have all been convergently working. All the persistently repeated supper-imagery of the Gospel parables concerning the future bliss of the saved will be fulfilled when, and where, "*the Lord's Supper*" has given place to His "drinking of the new wine with us in the kingdom of God" (Matt. xxvi.

29, etc.). The words will have had their suggestive, anticipatory fulfilments all along; these may suffice "*until He come*" (ver. 26). 5. When He comes, the Lord of the feast will declare the feast ended; the Heavenly Supper begins. The witness of the Supper to the faith of His Church, that the Unseen Lord is only unseen, not dead, and that He will one day again step out from behind the veil and appear with a visible intervention in human affairs, will be crowned with its triumphant vindication. It will need the vindication. Christ shall step forth just when Antichrist is lording it over men with fullest-blown blasphemy; when the love of many shall have waxed cold; when faith shall be hard to find in the earth, a few poor embers of its old fire almost smothered beneath the heap of ashes of men's dead beliefs (2 Thess. ii. 8; Matt. xxiv. 12; Luke xviii. 8). "*Till He come.*" Happy the dwindling band who still spread the table, and eat the supper, "preparing it in the midst of their enemies" (Ps. xxiii. 5), with dogged faith looking out for Him who is "their hope" (1 Tim. i. 1); "waiting for the Lord, as they that watch for the morning,"—not only as eagerly, but in as assured certainty that the morning whose breaking delays longest nevertheless will dawn (Ps. cxxx. 6). 6. "*In the midst of, and in spite of, evil.*" And how the repeated celebration of the little supper will have sustained faith. [The old argument of Leslie in his *Short and Easy Method with the Deists* is essentially sound wherever there are: (1) A fact of the past, near or remote, *e.g.* the Exodus of Israel; (2) An ordinance, repeatedly celebrated, in professed commemoration of the fact, *e.g.* the Passover; (3) the connection between the fact and the ordinance, asserted and embodied in a record, written or other, whose repetition is part of the commemorative rite; and (4) this repetition resting upon a command to that effect which professes to go back to the time of the original institution, *e.g.* Exod. xii. 26. He shows how impossible it is to conceive of a nation accepting the fact on the joint evidence of (2) and (3), unless on the supposition of its truth, seeing that (4) guards against the subsequent attachment of a pretended significant connection with (1)—whether this also be pretended or be real—to an existing ordinance of a different or unknown origin. Could a newly-devised Passover feast have been, at any but the contemporary date, offered to, or accepted by, a nation as an original and ancient memorial of the events connected with an Exodus itself perhaps a myth? Or, supposing that the only new thing was the asserted memorial significance, then with what success could those who propagated this, hope to attempt to attach it to a really ancient feast, when part of their assertion was also that the feast always had been celebrated with this commemorative meaning; and that, from the first, at least the instructions for celebrating it had included a prescribed question and answer expressly connecting the events and the festival? Presuming, that is, that this direction had always been obeyed, and that there had been no considerable periods during which the observance had not been kept up, Leslie's argument was strong, and has close correspondence with the argument often built up upon the fact and manner of the observance of the Supper in the Christian Church.] This undisputed letter of St. Paul is the first of a long series of testimonies, patristic and other, that from the first the Church of Christ has celebrated a supper with this significance. Moreover, in the four great families of Liturgies, the Oriental, the Alexandrian, the Roman, the Gallican and Spanish, can be found evidence mounting up to the fourth century, and almost to the third, that the bread has always been broken and the wine poured out in connection with a memorial use of the original words of institution. Very strong historical evidence this that, even though in this last particular we cannot make the ascending chain of evidence demonstrably link itself to the use of the institutory formula by Christ Himself, yet the lines so manifestly converge, that they must have a meeting-place in a fact, which—reversing the direction of

thought—is also their common point of origin. [For a brief, popular, accurate sketch of this argument and its foundation facts, see *Present Day Tracts*, No. 36, by Sir William Muir.] 7. Indeed, the solemn tone of the opening words of the account in ver. 23, it is suggested, betrays an already fixed "monumental" form of the teaching as to the origin and meaning of the supper. It is suffused with a tender solemnity, as it recalls in briefest suggestiveness the origin of the simple acts. Every stroke tells: "*The Lord Jesus*"; "*In the same night that He was betrayed.*" Jesus is in the foreground of the picture; but Judas is also there in the gloom of the background. "*Took up a loaf*," and afterwards "a *cup*." We can see His uplifted eyes; His as yet unpierced hands; we can hear His voice, "*giving thanks*," even then, and the "*betrayal*" so nigh! "*In the same night*," when selfishness touched the lowest depth it ever reached, and treachery sold the Lord of heaven for a slave's paltry price, in that night and no other, did unselfish, atoning, redeeming Love solemnly devote itself to death for the lost objects of its benevolence. On that night, when death was so nigh, and the toils of the hunters were every moment being drawn closer round the Object of human and devilish hatred, was His heart "at leisure from itself," not only to speak words of comfort and instruction to a sorrowing company in an upper room in Jerusalem, but also to take care for a Church in all ages and places and peoples, and to institute His tenderest, simplest memorial to the understanding and the heart, of **Himself. Good** uplifting itself in undimmed, immaculate, undefilable beauty in the midst of **Evil.** Light shining in the very midnight of black, defiling darkness. We who read will at least "*give thanks . . . in remembrance of*" Him and of His Supper table and its grace and love.

## *SEPARATE HOMILIES.*

Ver. 11. *Man and Woman.*—How all the arguments, vers. 2-15, assume the historic truth of the story of Gen. i., ii. Paul, it is admitted, does so; to him the relation of the sexes, the order of the family life, originated in the history, and rest upon it. Possible to admit the truth of all the teaching here about the relative positions of man and woman, and to regard the history as myth. But in that case the truth stands without known basis, or without any unchallengeable basis. A mere "happy" use of an old myth will hardly afford an argument such as—not Paul only, but—the inspiring Spirit might employ. The creation facts, and the physical facts of every-day knowledge, say that, subordinate as she is, the man needs the woman; and that, though he has headship, the man is made for the woman, and not alone for himself or his God.

I. 1. **Man and woman both are needed, to exhibit manhood in its perfection of idea;** neither without the other. Fitted respectively for restless activity and quiet retirement; to fight in the battles of life, to heal the wounds of the combatants; the stronger mind, the better-disposed heart; men arriving at truth by slow reasoning, women by quick intuitions; men consequently gaining more by the way, but oftener missing their way altogether (Luthardt); hence men oftener sceptical, women "naturally" more religious; ["an irreligious woman is a man spoilt, and doubly corrupting to those men over whom she acquires influence" (Luthardt);] man's the initiative, generative, originating mind, woman's the receptive and reproductive mind. Broadly true, and correspondent to, and founded in, physical differences; but with many exceptions in detail.

2. *The distinction and the unification mount higher.*—God is both Father and Mother in His love. No woman ever misses anything in Him because He is "Father." He is ideal Parenthood. So, too, the painters are guided by a right instinct when they give to the face of their ideals of Christ a somewhat feminine (not *effeminate*) man-

hood. He is Man and Woman; in Him neither is without the other. No girl ever feels that Christ does not understand her because He was "only a boy"; no woman ever feels that He is not for her because He is a man. His "sex" never occurs to the mind or heart. He is man and woman, strength and tenderness; the wisdom of both types of mind and heart are in Him; perfect Manhood.

3. *The perfectly rounded Christian character combines and exhibits* the best characteristics of *both*. If women are "more religious" than men, it is because it is easier for them to enter by "Little-children Gate" into the Kingdom. Dependence, docility, belief in what comes on authority,—all that makes the little child typical of the character which alone can enter, all these are nearer akin to the woman's character and habit than to the man's. The man enters the kingdom "not without the woman," developed, or submitted to, in him. The perfect manhood of grace needs, however, to add to faith "virtue" (perhaps = "courage"). As between man and God there is no room in man for *self*-reliance, but, as between man and man, and in doing the work of God in the world, there is room and need for "*the man*."

III. **Christianity, the Church, the work of God, each needs, and has availed itself of, both "man" and "woman."**—It would never have succeeded, it will never succeed, so far as human conditions of success are concerned, unless by the employment of both. The *presence* and *interaction of the sexes* is *a valuable* element in the *educational effect* of the Church upon its members. Sanctified family life, with the reciprocal, incessant, little-adverted-to, training of husband and wife, brothers and sisters, is the seminal instance and example of the training given by, and gained from, the brotherhood and sisterhood in the Church of Christ. *Each sex has its gifts* and capabilities complementary to, lacking in, those of the other. Woman can reach where man is excluded; man can dare where woman may not go. Wisest Church organisers utilise both to the utmost of possibility. Rom. xvi. is a picture of an early Church, and is full of women who, like the men, are "in the Lord." Nor are they simply receivers of blessing; they "labour," and even "labour *much* in the Lord"; they can with their husbands lay down their own necks in running risks and daring death to save an apostle's life. Indeed, Priscilla may precede Aquila; possibly just as in a Church to-day there are godly women who, without unwomanly obtrusiveness, have so much more of initiative than their equally godly and devoted, but quieter, husbands, that every one says, or thinks, "Mrs. and Mr. ——." "*In the Lord*," in the sphere and realm where He is supreme, and where everything bears the stamp of His lordship and ownership, "Woman" and "Man" are both required. Neither is without the other. In the new creation in the soul, in that other new creation, the "kingdom of God" on earth, the original, natural order of the Creator's idea is being perfectly restored.

Ver. 20. "*The Lord's supper.*"

I. **Supper.**—1. *The proper, Scriptural name of the ordinance.* Jewish Christians familiar with the idea. Judaism had its supper. The birthday supper of their nation and "Church." The Supper, the Sabbath, the Holy Place, the Circumcision-rite [with exactly the same continuity of "development" which obtains between successive stages of God's *creative* work—neither less nor more close], have been brought forward into Christianity, but modified—preserving the basal principle, their *raison d'être*—and stamped with the seal of Christ, "the Lord." In these "days of the Son of Man" everything has become "the Lord's," implicitly or expressly. We have "the Lord's Day"; "Church" is [etymologically (see Skeat, *Dict.*) and in fact] "the Lord's House"; Baptism is (at least closely connected with) the "Circumcision of Christ" (Col. ii. 11);

in our chapter occur "the Lord's Table, Cup, and Supper." He had taken one of the many cups drunk at the Passover supper; and of it, with a simple loaf from the table, had made His own new Supper, belonging to a new order of things in which "the Lord Christ" is all, and in all.

2. *Not a sacrifice.*—(1) A very large, historically important section of the Church affirms it is. "Body and blood, soul and divinity, of the Lord Jesus Christ, bread and wine no longer remaining." (Conc. Trid., *Can.*, § 13, 1.) A transformation the more marvellous because not cognisable or verifiable by any of the senses. Men who alone can effect it are of a special order—"priests"; the service they conduct is a "sacrifice" of this "body," etc.,—a real sacrifice, making expiation for the sins of the living, and (if they please) of the dead; in connection with it and with auricular confession of sins, they claim the power to remit (and, by consequence, to withhold) the "temporal" penalty of sin. (2) Basis of all this is, "This **is** My body." But cf. "*This cup*"—not even the wine in it—"**is** the New Testament in My blood" (Luke xxii. 20). Rigid literalism of interpretation carried consistently through ends in absurdity of interpretation. (3) The Epistle to the Hebrews negatives all this. In it Christianity knows only one altar (xiii. 10), one sacrifice for sins (x. 12), one Priest to offer it (x. 21). Many priests, repeated sacrifices, belonged only to the imperfection of the type. But even the type was right in this: one only *place* for offering this atoning sacrifice. Synagogues (in later days) were everywhere; but in Damascus, or Tarsus, or Rome, or (the later) Babylon, for an altar and a priest and an atoning sacrifice, a devout Jew must look toward, or visit, Jerusalem. On that one spot only might such a sacrifice be found. So in every place the Christian worshipper must turn to the Heavenly Sanctuary only, trusting that there the One High Priest, long ago "entered within the veil," is presenting His one perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for sins. No priest, then, at an altar, but a fellow-guest,—representing, perhaps, the great Host Himself,—at a supper table:—the minister.

II. **Three words gather up the teaching of the New Testament as to the ordinance: 1. Commemoration; 2. Communion; 3. Covenant.**—1. *Commemoration.* (1) Luke xxii. 19: "This do, in remembrance" (spoken when distributing the bread); revealed to Paul, "Do this, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance" (as He gave the cup). Paul adds the inspired comment: "As often as ye eat . . . ye do show the Lord's death until He come." The act looks backward to Calvary [as well as forward to the Second Coming. In the face of denials of the resurrection—and of His resurrection—or the scoffer who asks, "Where is the promise of His coming?" the Church at the Table proclaims, "We look for Him to appear the second time," etc. (Heb. ix. 28); and we purpose to proclaim our hope and confident expectation "until He come"]. The Church at the Supper says: "We believe in Jesus Christ, . . . Who suffered under Pontius Pilate, . . . crucified, dead, and buried, . . . rose again, . . . ascended, . . . sitteth." The Creed, with its facts of History, is implied in the celebration of the Supper. (2) The very fact of the observance of such a Supper does something to prove our faith reasonable. [And, given the past facts, the hope for the future is reasonable too.] Impossible, travelling backward, to find an age when the Church did not meet to break bread together, and that as a token of faith in the Cross and its Atonement; all but impossible to account for their doing it—above all with this meaning—unless on the supposition that the events commemorated are really historical. These are reasons of no slight force on which may rest the faith of the heart of the Church of Christ. (3) "The heart"; for this no mere commemoration of a fact of history. Conceivable

that an annual public reading of the narratives, perhaps with some suitable ceremonial accompaniment, might have sufficed for that. The Lord made the commemoration one for the heart, as well as for the understanding, when He made the celebration itself symbolise the truths to be kept in view and enshrined in the history. The broken bread, the poured-out wine, lift the *heart's* eyes to the body broken with scourge, thorn, nail, spear; to the blood poured forth to secure remission of sins. "The Lord's death" is not merely the crucifying of one Jesus of Nazareth at a particular date, outside the walls of Jerusalem, but "God setting forth Christ Jesus a propitiation," etc. (Rom. iii. 25, 26); "setting Him forth" in full view of three worlds—angelic, infernal, human; in full view of the heart of the guest at the Supper. So from age to age the Church hands on the deposit of testimony—to the history and to the meaning of it—which each generation receives from its preceding one; [each generation receives the torch of Hope from its predecessor, and in turn hands it on to the waiting next one; only to be quenched when He comes].

2. *Communion.*—(1) Paul's comment in x. 16. Significant in the East, and not without meaning in the colder, prosaic West, to eat food together; it very early meant to establish a compact of peace, friendship, mutual defence. The persecuted Church of early ages felt vividly how sitting side by side at a common meal was an avowal of their unity in the face of heathen neighbours and kindred, and a pledging of themselves to love and fidelity each to other. The little Christian host, warring in an enemy's country, at the Supper table join hands, and go forth again to fight ["strengthened as with bread of life"], to stand shoulder to shoulder, back to back, foursquare to the assault of the world and sin. "The club-feast of the Christian society" (*Ecce Homo*); this, though more. A periodical reunion of all believers in Christ, which may remind them of their separateness from the world, and of their close-drawn brotherhood and association for common aims, work, help, and in a common hope. [Here the close resemblance to the Love-feast, which was the "club-feast" and no more. Hence their conjoint, confluent celebration in early times; especially remembering how the first Lord's Supper was the emphasising of a particular point in the course of a prolonged meal.] (2) This satisfies, lawfully, the craving for some continuous linking with the Early Church, and for some visible linking with the world-wide Church of to-day, or of any one century. The gulf of nearly nineteen centuries is bridged over by an unbroken succession of little companies, who—kneeling, sitting, with gorgeous ritual, or with none at all—have broken bread and drunk wine together in memory of their common Lord and Founder. At the Supper table the humblest Christian joins hands with apostles and martyrs; with the living, fighting, working Church, in all Churches and lands to-day; with the living, resting, glorified Church of those "who have departed this life in His faith and fear." The front ranks of God's great sacramental host—one in every time and place—have long ago, or recently, passed into the skies; rear ranks are not yet come into view; midway at the Supper the Christian of to-day vindicates and confesses his place in the host. [No rank, or social distinction, known at the Table. Master, servant, children, all there.] "Ye being many," etc. (x. 17). (3) "Partakers of that one body." This to be noted. Not only association, brotherhood, fellowship, but all these resting upon, rooted in, a "communion," a common sharing in the One Lord. He called the personal appropriation of Himself, so as to make Him the strength and sustenance of our spiritual life, "eating His flesh," "drinking His blood" (John vi.), "living by eating Him." The same Holy Ghost—the Life of the Body, Who dwelt in a Corinthian Christian, dwells

in a Christian in a foreign land to-day, dwells in the English Christian who sits at the "Communion" Supper.

3. *Covenant.*—(1) The Covenant significance, announced in Christ's words of institution, and in Paul's report upon the matter, makes the Supper a Sacrament. [In old Church Latin, a symbol of some hidden truth.] Conceivably, as matter of expedient ceremonial and teaching, a man might have instituted a custom of a united supper as a memorial and communion ordinance. But only Christ could say Luke xxii. 20, or Matt. xxvi. 28 (2) The writer of the Hebrews (ix. 19, 20) carries back exegesis and thought to Exod. xxiv. 6-8. Under shadow of Sinai, newly given law read in hearing of Israel; that done, the book, with its precepts inwritten, the altar, the people, were sprinkled with the blood of their [own provision of] peace offerings. Moses cried, "The blood of the covenant." etc. "The blood of the Old Testament"; "the blood of the New Testament." The people provided the offerings; Moses, on behalf of God, ordained, accepted, used, the shed blood. God and Israel entered into covenant. They were pledged to obedience; God was pledged to faithfulness in blessing. As it means the Creed; so the Supper involves on man's side the Commandments; and, on God's side their preface, "I am the Lord thy God," interpreted as in Luke xx. 38. (3) So, though we provide the materials for the meal, it is "the Lord's Supper." We procure,—He directs that we shall, and accepts and uses,—the bread and the wine; and He, as really as we are, is covenanted. Hence 1 Cor. xi. 28: "*So* let him eat"; *i.e.* having examined himself; having renounced the sin he finds; purposing to avoid it by the covenanted help of Christ. (4) No special appropriateness then for this Supper to a dying hour or a sick-chamber. Certainly no passport thence to a surer heaven; the bread is no heathenish *obolus* on the tongue, to fee some other-world ferryman or doorkeeper. Also, no special privilege of "good people" as such. All living in covenant communion with God in Christ, or seeking to do so; all sincere penitents "trying" to cast themselves with all reliance upon Christ; may come, guests welcome to the Supper, and may there learn to know, or to know better, the Lord Whose guests they are.

Ver. 31. *Self-judgment.*

I. "**If we would.**"—Why do we not?

1. *We are too indolent.*—It is troublesome to go thoroughly into an incessant analysis of motives and inclinations and desires. These are often not single and undivided, but exceedingly complex. "*A* motive" is the resultant of the interaction of a whole set of motives. It is easier, it disturbs our comfortable adjustment of ourselves to our social environment less, it involves no inconvenient, "ungentlemanly" necessity of condemning what our "good sort" of neighbours are and do, to accept some ready-made, external, customary standard of character and behaviour, and to be content, in our own case at all events, with a tolerably close approximation to even this—so close that we pass muster with, it may be, not a little credit amongst our fellows. Yet such a standard must needs be concerned only with the outside of the man; the judgments of which it is the instrument must needs be somewhat "rough estimates." It convicts only the few specially prominent points which it touches. All the detail of the outer life, and all the inner life, it ignores. So long as we are content to live outside our true self, and to be only on terms of acquaintance and not intimacy with ourself, the average or *minimum* character which passes muster in our "set," whether Christian or "worldly," may satisfy us. But we do not know the man whom that other Judge knows.

2. *We are too proud.*—Such experiment as men do sometimes make, under the constraint of that "moral honesty" which is really part of the

Holy Spirit's preliminary work in the human soul, so constantly ends in very uncomfortable, disquieting, unsatisfactory discoveries, that they will go no further. Now and then some unusually marked incident of moral failure forces upon them what is to them an amazing revelation; for a moment there yawns within them, and they must look down into, a moral abyss of darkness and defiling sin, such as they never suspected or believed was possible. Their new discovery may issue in a penitent, self-loathing prostration of the man at the feet of Him who can "create a clean heart" within; or it may be followed by a refusal to look any longer, or to learn any more; by a resolute endeavour to forget what has been seen and to avert the mind's glance altogether from the direction in which such unwelcome discoveries may again by possibility lie. The natural heart rebels against the accusation, and still more against the conviction, of sin. Pride will not let men "judge themselves."

3. *Moral inability.*—Not any original inability. "**If** *we would*" assumes that, normally, men may. There is, as a matter of fact, no total blindness, no total ignorance of God's moral standard, no utter want of spiritual power; the grace of a Redeemer has secured some measure of these for every man—enough to "begin upon." And this restored, gracious power of perception and judgment may grow by exercise; it will be increased on every act of obedience to its decisions; but it may also be disregarded and disobeyed until it is lost. The inner standards of right and wrong may be depraved, and the power to apply them be lost altogether. Blind man could not have given himself again an eye to see, or light to see by; but these given, he can create darkness for himself and renew his blindness. Too many *cannot* "*judge themselves*," because the standard is lost and the faculty for applying it gone. But, short of that, there are, in varying degrees, the obscuration, the deadening, the blunting of the moral sensibility or sensitiveness, till, even with the objective standard in the Word of God still clearly legible, and comparison with it inevitable and constant, many men are, in popular phrase, "*no judges* of themselves." They are in David's case, who for more than nine months after the murder of Uriah the Hittite seems to have lived in happy enjoyment of his shameful possession of the murdered man's wife, and to have occupied himself with the ordinary round of royal duty and pleasure, without any sense of remorse or of sin at all; conscience silent [or forcibly *silenced*: cf. Ps. xxxii. 3, 4, and 5, which usually are connected with this episode in David's career]; fear of God's wrath hardly, if at all, felt. Such sensuality as that of Corinth, if even only allowed to enter and contaminate the imagination, thus dulls the moral sensibility and weakens the moral "*judgment*," with fearfully cumulative effect. "*If we would*" means living with such a guard upon ourselves, that nothing is tolerated, encouraged, cultivated, which will interfere with the instant readiness of conscience to judge, with a growing fineness of perception, our actions, and our whole position before God.

II. **What if we will not?**—Then we come before another Judge, Whose decision goes a stage further than our own would do. Ours is the judgment of the jury—the verdict; His is the judgment both of the jury and of the judge—verdict and sentence and penalty. At Corinth it came as physical evil—sickness, and even death in many cases. But His penalties on this side the grave are not irrevocable nor merely penal; they may be corrective, reformatory, if with them a man will seek to have and to use the grace of God; the chastenings of a Father, not the punishments of a King, "*condemning the world.*" Three stages are marked out: (1) Come into condemnation at your own court of first instance within, and then it may be you will

not need to come into God's condemnation. (2) Come under the temporal, reformatory chastisements of a Divine Father. If these are tried and fail, if neither He nor your heart is suffered to rebuke, convict, reform, then (3) You come into condemnation, to a judgment which knows no issue but the doom of "*the world.*" (Cf. the obscure passage, v. 5.)

## *HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.*

Ver. 30. The connection between moral and physical evil is :—

I. Clearly revealed.

II. Daily exemplified.

III. In accordance with true philosophy.

IV. Should be an incentive to holiness.—[*J. L.*]

Vers. 30-32. Temporal judgments are :—

I. Usually occasioned by sin; yet the absence of them is no proof of innocence (Luke xiii. 1-5).

II. Mercifully designed to save us from final condemnation.

III. May possibly be averted by faithful dealing with ourselves.—[*J. L.*]

## *APPENDED NOTE.*

Note the suggestion of some upon x. 31, that the Lord's Supper is [only] the highest instance of the sanctification of even the lowliest, most material, most nearly animal, part of our common life. Note also how at Emmaus the ordinary supper which is in progress is in a moment glorified into, at any rate, a suggestion of the "Last Supper." Note how, similarly, in ver. 25, the express statement of time makes the blessing, etc., of the bread to have taken place during supper, and the differentiating of the meal from the sacrament to have only become patent in connection with the sanctification of the cup to its new use. Well illustrated by the incident told of Fletcher of Madeley by James Rogers, the husband of the well-known Hester Ann Rogers : "I had long desired to converse with . . . Mr. Fletcher, and now an opportunity offered itself. Stopping at Bristol for a few days to rest myself and horse, I heard of his being at Mr. Ireland's, about three miles off, in a poor state of health, and, with two of my brethren, took a ride to see him. When we came there, he was returning from a ride. . . . Dismounting from his horse, he came towards us with arms spread open and eyes lifted up to heaven. His apostolic appearance, with the whole of his deportment, amazingly affected us." [Then, after a brief conversation, all in keeping with his habitual spirituality of mind], "We were about to take our leave, when Mr. Ireland sent his footman into the yard with a bottle of red wine and some slices of bread upon a waiter; we all uncovered our heads, whilst Mr. Fletcher craved a blessing upon the same; which he had no sooner done, than he handed first the bread to each, and then, lifting up his eyes to heaven, pronounced these words : 'The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life.' Afterwards, handing the wine, he repeated in like manner, 'The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ,' etc. But such a sacrament I never had before. A sense of the Divine presence rested upon us all; and we were melted into floods of tears. His worthy friend, Mr. Ireland, grieved to see him exhaust his little strength by so much speaking, took him by the arm, and almost forced him into the house; while he kept looking wishfully, and speaking to us, as long as we could see him. We then mounted our horses and rode away."—*Early Methodist Preachers*, iv. 301-303.

# CHAPTER XII.

## *CRITICAL NOTES.*

Ver. 1.—**Gifts** is a translators' supplement; right in fact, as vers. 4-11 show; slightly too precise in word. Almost certainly *neuter*, and so very general, "*spiritual things.*" Another of the topics laid before Paul for his discussion and guiding instructions.

Ver. 2. **Dumb.**—In contrast with the "*tongues,*" which were, in the mind of the Corinthians, the most striking and choice *charism* of the Spirit; denying also to the idol, and attributing implicitly to the "demon" (x. 19, 20) the "oracles" of heathenism [possibly the diabolic correlatives of the "tongues" and of "inspiration"], Hab. ii. 19; "dumb" also standing for the whole impotence and nothingness of the heathen idolatries, Isa. xliv. 9-17, xlvi. 5-7; and particularly Ps. cxv. 4-7; in brief. **Led.**—A *personal* leading; as in x. 19, 20; Eph. ii. 2 *sq.*, etc. And, in a lower degree, by priestly or governmental authority, or by national and ancestral custom. Contrast the "*leading*" of the Spirit, Rom. viii. 14, Gal. v. 18, and the intelligent, personal choice of Christ required and supposed in Christianity.

Ver. 3.—"So then you may distinguish the voice of the Spirit from the voice of the evil spirit—the mere *idol* has no voice—by this test." Observe "*anathema.*" In the *synagogue* this would be heard, "*Jesus*" being the simple personal name of the "Man of Nazareth" naturally employed by Jews. The Gentile denials of their Lord at the bidding or leading of demons took another form, that of participating in the heathen feasts (x. 14-22). This test under another aspect appears in 1 John iv. 2, 3. But beyond this was a special "*gift*" of "*discerning of spirits*" (ver. 10). **Lord.**—"*Verbum solenne* in LXX. for Hebrew **Jehovah**" (Evans). So, in effect, but in reverse order, 1 John v. 1. Also Matt. xvi. 17 (Peter's confession).

Ver. 4.—Subject to this one unvarying characteristic and test of the Spirit's presence and work in a man, there is "*variety* and *distribution*" of "*gifts,*" "*manifestations*" which reveal the presence of "*the same Spirit*" *of God.* 1. Observe (as R.V.) "*diversities*" in each case; same word. 2. Observe the Trinitarian form of the passage; the "practical and experimental," as always, moulded over, and clothing, a skeleton of Trinitarian theology.

Ver. 5. **Administrations.**—Human "*ministrations,*" "forms of service" (not *official* only), under the same Captain of the Army, the same Head of the House, the same King over the Redemption-realm.

Ver. 6.—"*Workings*" for "*operations.*" "The effects, results, outward manifestations of the same inworking power. . . . The practical exhibitions of that power" (Ellicott).

Ver. 7.—*Not* his *personal* profit, only or chiefly.

Vers. 8-10.—Note 1. More accurately, the changing prepositions "*through,*" "*according to,*" "*in.*" The Spirit "is the channel through which they come, the standard with which they agree, the element in which they are possessed and used" (Beet). Also "three series,—intellectual gifts (ver. 8), gifts conspicuously miraculous (vers. 9, 10*a*), gifts connected with 'tongues' (ver. 10*b*)" (Beet). Note 2. **Wisdom**, more general, practical, discursive and argumentative; **Knowledge**, more restricted, theoretic or scientific, something more intuitive, *e.g.* as in Paul and John respectively (Stanley). Note 3. The "*word*" characterised by and specially the vehicle of, "*wisdom*" or "*knowledge.*" Note 4. **Faith.**—For miracle-working, as xiii. 2. Good case in Acts iii. 16: "His Name, through *faith* in His Name, hath made this man strong." Note 5. **Prophecy.**—See Appended Note. So also for "*tongues.*"

Ver. 11.—Observe the *activity* and *will* here attributed to the Holy Ghost, and the "sovereignty" with which He apportions His "*gifts.*"

### The Body Parable.

Ver. 12. **Christ.**—The Great Unit in all God's thought and purpose in the history of Redemption. So Gal. iii. 16. Not the personal Christ, but the "Christ mystical."

Ver. 13.—Observe again the prepositions "*in,*" "*into,*" ["of;" query, recalling, x. 4? Also Evans would translate, "*were drenched with,*" denying any reference, *in this third clause*, to baptism]. "*Into*" might, grammatically, only mean "*unto*" or "*for,*" *i.e.* of the aim or purpose of baptism; whether more is found in the word depends upon a man's whole reading and interpretation of New Testament teaching upon the topic. Cf. Gal. iii. 27, 28.

Vers. 14-17.—Beet points out that the members—not merely the lowest, but those next to

the highest—compare themselves, *as men do*, with others resembling, though superior to, themselves. "*I am not of the body*" is said in the spirit of wounded vanity which fancies it has a grievance, and exaggerates it: "By the look of things I am not reckoned in the body," and then flings itself out of fellowship: "Well then, I won't be!" *One* (kind of) *member*, ver. 14, and so vers. 19, 20.

Ver. 18.—Cf. with ver. 11; here the sovereign will is that of "*God*." [Different words for *will*; this the fundamental, original determination underlying all the order of the world.]

Ver. 22.—Many "*necessary*" members are incapable of *self-defence* (Beet). "Those more delicate portions of our bodily structure, external or internal, which, compared with the more obviously active and energetic members of the body, might seem to be *somewhat* feeble" (Ellicott). But Paul is *designedly indefinite* in his reference.

Ver. 23.—"Alluding to the almost universal instinct of fitness or of decency which has dictated, on the one hand, the use of ornaments, on the other hand, the necessity of clothing" (Stanley).

Ver. 25.—Expository again of the simple, original meaning of "*schism*" (i. 10, xi. 18). There is a conveyance of working *inward* upon the Body and its welfare, as well as *upward* upon the Head and His honour and will.

Ver. 27.—Not merely "a body," but "*the body of Christ*"; organic to Him as a man's body is organic to him. (See Separate Homily.) **In particular.**—Rare expression, only here and in xiii. 9, 10, 12. Choose between (1) "Members of this imperfect earthly half of the one earthly-heavenly Church" (Evans); and, as most, (2) "Each one of you made a member with his several part and function." *I.e.* "Collectively the body; *individually*, the limbs" (Stanley).

Ver. 28.—"*First*," "*secondarily*," etc., order not merely of enumeration, but of *dignity*; great "*drop*" at "*then*." Two exceptional "orders" respectively begin and close the list: "apostles," "*tongues*." "*Teachers*," who spoke without the exceptional and direct impulse of the "*prophet*" [moreover, the *prophet* declares new truth; the *teacher* expounds and applies truth already given], and without the ecstasy of the "*tongue*"-gifted men. "*Helps*," vague, but perhaps doing such service as visiting the sick, etc.; "*governments*," perhaps practical tact and faculty for administration of affairs and the management and direction of men, whilst not excelling as "*teachers*" or "*miracle-workers*."

Vers. 29, 30.—Notice the insertion of "*workers of*." **Interpret.**—*Q.d.* the "*tongues*" in which the others "*spoke*." "*Tongues*" *last*, not to indicate Paul's estimate of the gift as distinctly opposite to that of the Corinthians, but as being, as it were, an exceptional gift appended to the ordinary list.

Ver. 31. **Best.**—"*Greater*" (R.V.; new reading); *i.e.* the more noble and useful amongst the foregoing list (xiv. 1). *But* there is something better than the best, and this too, as the gifts were not, even in richly endowed Corinth, for all. **More excellent.**—Found also in Rom. vii. 13; 2 Cor. i. 8, iv. 17 (strengthened); Gal. i. 13; cf. iv. 7, xii. 7.

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Whole Chapter.*

The topics here may be grouped around four words:—

A. The **Diversity** of gifts and offices.
B. The **Unity** of the body.
C. The **Dependence** of member upon member.
D. The **Serviceableness** of each member to the whole body.

A. **Diversity.**—1. The abundance of the gifts bestowed upon the Corinthian Church was matter of thankful wonder even to Paul (i. 5). But the variety is as wonderful. It may be that in this chapter we have a generalised description of The Church and its endowments, rather than an exact sketch of this Church in particular. Yet with all abatements, the impression does remain that beyond most of the early Churches Corinth was a miniature of the greater Body in the completeness with which it exhibited in its midst every type of gift and character. Gifts distributed over many other Churches are all at least "sampled" in Corinth. "*The body is not one kind of member, but many*" (ver. 14). 2. There is no mechanical reproduction of any one type of member; they are not made and endowed to do one thing only, and all the same one thing. That is not God's method; that is not the habit of Life. Wherever He works, wherever It is, there is variety. "As like as two peas in a pod;" but two

peas lying side by side in their narrow green bed are not mechanical copies of each other. They are individual, even though the differences may be minute. There are no duplicate faces; no absolutely correspondent sides of the same face; no exactly symmetrical halves and lobes of bodies or of organs; no pair of leaves exactly balance each other as a "pair." Ruskin, in his *Modern Painters*, has engraved a diagrammatic drawing of the scheme of ramification of a forest tree. It has a beauty; there is a beauty about the careful and exact work of a machine, and about the logically consequential correspondence of part with part, and the development of part from part. But no tree ever grew with such mechanically exact bifurcation of branches, or with such rigorous completeness and balance of parts. It is, as he calls it, a tree "drawn by a Clerk of the Works." It is not the artist's tree, nor the Creator's tree, nor the living tree. However it may be, there is always diversity touching even the nearest correspondence. In the diversity of organ, and office, and function, in a body, and of member, and office, and function, in "*The* Body of Christ," we have only a particular instance of the working out of one of God's ruling "ideas" in nature. It is "a law" which holds good "in the natural and the spiritual world," both. In the Body, men and women are "*members in particular*" (ver. 27); each having his own work, each made on his own pattern. "*Gifts;*" the "*ministrations*" of this man or that; the "*workings*" of the same underlying power of God in this or that Christian;—"*diversity*" is stamped on them all (vers. 4-6). Nor does the application of the principle end as between class and class. Within the same class, all "*apostles*," or all "*prophets*," or all "*helps*," or "*governments*," or "*tongues*," vary. No two apostles ever do the same work. [No two evangelists have given us the same gospel; each is individualised very strongly.] No two "*teachers*" ever caught and presented identically the same aspect of the whole round of truth. 3. There is order in the diversity, "*first*," "*second*," "*thirdly*," "*after that*," "*then*." The apostle's office was unique; the prophet's office was passing away while men heard Paul speak of it; the tongues are silent; the miracle is done. But in the shorter list that remains the ranking is significant. "*Teaching*" heads the diminished enumeration; and yet what more necessary gift does the God Who "*sets every man in* the Church *as it hath pleased* Him," and Whose Spirit in like manner "*divides to every man severally as* He *will*," ever bestow upon a Church, than the men who have "*helps, governments*"? So long as human hearts are perverse, and their judgments fallible, and that too in different directions; the more the growth of the work of the Church forces "division of labour" upon those who are responsible for its welfare and its success; so long and the more will the man be in demand who can organise work, who can hit the right time for doing or beginning it, who is both master of broad schemes and is not overwhelmed with the small details of execution, who can rightly judge of character, and lay his hand exactly on the suitable human instrument, who can lead or govern men with all their variety, their touchiness, their vanity, their smallness of temper. "*Helps*," "*governments*,"—these may rank after the supreme necessity of "*teaching*," but in order they do not march far behind! And, most of all, the primacy of order is accorded to *the* "*best gifts*," the most useful to the Church, the most honouring to the Master. 4. Nothing is more necessary to recognise than that *the diversity is a limitation.* It is of no use to be disappointed, or vexed, that the human instrument cannot always do every kind of work. It is of no use to blame, or to rate as if of lower value or fidelity, the man who is "very willing to do anything he is asked to do," but who now and again is a disappointing, troublesome failure in some things he undertakes. Perhaps he was set to work he was not made for; he was not "*set in the Body*" to do that. Better to be thankful for his willing mind, and for his not infrequent usefulness or success. There are few, or no, really "all-round"

men. There are no "all-round" members in a body. Also, the man himself will be saved from a morbid sensitiveness of self-reproach, by remembering that the differentiation of organ and function and power which is more and more the characteristic of more highly organised life, is a limitation in many directions, a real disqualification for many forms of service. His zeal for good may be as great, his consecration of himself to Christ as full and perfect and entire, his spirituality as deep and intense, as that of some more obviously and attractively successful member, with whom he is tempted to compare his own smaller, less obvious "results" and work. "*Not one* (kind of) *member*." His concern is only with the whole-hearted devotion of himself, just for what he is, and *for what he is not*, just for what he can, *and cannot*, do, to the glory of Christ and the good of the Body. The Lord of the Church knows exactly where to put and use him; just where his special, if narrow, or humble qualification will be of most service, and where his limitations will be least detrimental, or not detrimental at all, to the growth of the Body and the work of Christ through It in the world. Consecration, intensity of spirituality, are in themselves an equipment for usefulness; but they will not make a foot do the work of a hand, or an ear, or an eye. 5. *To remember that specialisation is limitation* as well as qualification, *will also save a man from the feeling which finds expression in* vers. 15-17. It begins, be it noted, in a comparison of oneself with a "*member*" higher or more honourable; whether really so, or according to customary estimation. Possibly the comparison may at first have been the self-depreciating, needlessly condemning one just suggested in 4. But it is very apt to pass over into a fretful discontent that one is limited, and cannot do what the "*hand*" or "*eye*" can do, or win the credit they gain. The "*foot*" that begins by wishing it could do what the "*hand*" does, soon ends by murmuring that it cannot. And it is not a long step, it is one easily taken, when this disheartened disappointment lends itself to the leading of wounded vanity, to a *pique* which will do nothing, not even its own characteristic and intended office. "I am not the hand; I cannot do this or that which the hand does. Am I of any use in the Body? Am I really in it?" very readily is transformed into, "I am not the hand; I am no longer—I will not be—of the body."

B. **Unity.**—"*E pluribus unum.*" All such judgments as have been suggested, even those which are honestly, humbly meant, are so many forms of self-centering. The safeguard against them, and their remedy, is to go deeper than the **diversity**, and see the profound, glorious **unity**.

I. **What is it that is one?**—1. "*The Body*"; and, more wonderfully, "*Christ.*" The wife takes the husband's name; Adam and Eve are "*Adam*"; the branches are, and can do, so utterly "nothing apart from Him," Who is the very basis and source of their life, that He appropriates to Himself the name which ordinarily covers stock and branches: "I am **the Vine**." Conversely, here the Head is so pre-eminent in importance amongst the components of a body—though it is no "head" apart from "*the members*"; cut off from it, they are so entirely without power, or will, or life; the head, moreover, so nearly completely expresses the man, that, for example, the picture of the head is taken as the picture of the man ["That is Mr. So-and-so," men say, when looking only at a bust]; that, in this Body, "*Christ*" covers Christ and His people." [In Gal. v. 16 His name stands alone in the covenant promise: "to thy seed—which is Christ." But it is manifestly no boon to Him personally which is thus conveyed and assured to "Christ." To Him indeed, but to Him only for the sake of the wider "seed," who, with Him, and in their union with Him, are "heirs" also "according to (the tenor of) the promise," *ib.* v. 29).]

2. That Body, that "Christ," "The Church" when so defined and vindicated, is always "*one.*" It is only the imperfect human expression of, and approxi-

mation to, this "*one body*," which is outwardly divided, and even rent into antagonistic confession, and "communions"—(save the mark !)

II. **How is it one?**—1. "One," "Holy," "Catholic," "Apostolic," are four "notes" of the Church, found in the earlier Christian creeds. The confessional and ecclesiastical definitions of the first have been very various, ranging between widely removed extremes of theory and teaching. At the one is the theory which sees no unity where there is not connection with an historically continuous organisation, of which an essential factor is a succession of orders inherent in one special line of ministry, ordained in one special manner, and presumed to stand in direct and authorising connection with the apostles themselves. At the other stands the theory which, beyond the unity of the particular congregation, sees no oneness but that of voluntary aggregation. Midway is a compromise attempted by those who—Anglican with diocesan episcopacy or Lutheran without it—only hope for or believe in the unity of national Churches. [Governmental, Gregarious, Geographical.] 2. But, as a matter of exposition, a point of outward, manifest, historical oneness so universal as baptism with (more or less of) water in the name of the Trinity, is very subordinate even in ver. 13, where the "*baptism*" on which the stress is laid is that "*in the one Spirit.*" The unifying Headship of Christ itself is not in our passage so prominent as the unifying presence, and "*work*," and "*manifestation*," and endowments of the Spirit of God. *Ubi Spiritus ibi Ecclesia.* We customarily distinguish between "gifts" and "graces"; here they are alike "*spiritual* (things)" (so, literally, ver. 1). All, and each several one, of them bespeak the presence of the indwelling Holy Ghost. Whether "*through*," or "*according to*," or "*in*" be Paul's carefully chosen and varied word, *i.e.* whether He be the channel, or the regulating and testing *norm*, or the very life element in which they are enjoyed; every charism, ordinary and permanent, or extraordinary, and passing with the Apostolic age, brilliant, or useful merely—every one leads upward and backward to a common Original,—One Holy Ghost. These are all evidences of His presence Who is the life—not *which*, but—*by which* the Body lives. If each member lives, it is because it shares in Him the life of the whole. He "*divides*" not only His gifts, but Himself, "*to every man.*" "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. viii. 9). This Vine feels, in every tiniest twig and to the farmost tip of every finest tendril; this Body feels, in every most humble member, and most remote from the head, and to the very extremity of the last thread of each many-branching nerve; one common Life,—the Spirit of that special life which is in Christ Jesus (Rom. viii. 2). The Unity is a unity of the life-element in the body, a life-element which not only holds together all the components of the living organism, but which by its presence holds in check the forces of disintegration and decay, the forces which make for "Death." 3. *The "gifts" speak of a unity of Source and Giver.* The "*cloven tongues*" of Pentecost, rightly appreciated, exhibited this, at the very outset of the new order, the dispensation of the Spirit. The painters of uncritical centuries, often deriving their traditional conception from ill-instructed ecclesiastics, have generally given us a seated company of men and women, on the head of each of whom rests a split, pointed flame like that of a lamp. Every tongue is pretty much a copy of every other,—in utter antithesis to the diversity in unity of vers. 8-11. Each head has its own tongue. Almost if it had been a Holy Ghost to each, working in each an almost precisely similar gift and manifestation! Whereas the truer reading exactly expresses the fact; which the real appearance also exhibited. Over the head of the one company hung the one flame-like appearance [a Shekinah-cloud?] darting "disparted tongues as of fire," out and down, one to each several head. [With guarded use the (very) material illustration may serve: The unity of the source of the supply of gas and water through the

thousand homes of a modern municipality. The light which cheers in a sick-room in some artisan's cottage at the poorer end, is no separate and independent —candle-like, lamp-like—illumination; it is being every moment fed from the same source, and out of the same common body of illuminating material, as are the lights which are at that moment blazing in the drawing-rooms of the wealthiest of the "West End" homes. Every house in the place "*drinks into*" one and the same common central water-store. The water is not "mine" or "yours"; it is "ours."] 4. *The highest evidence of the unity of* the Spirit is *the common confession of the* "**Lordship**" *of* "**Jesus.**" Even in Corinth, amongst "*spiritual*" men, though they be only of a "*carnal*" grade, there is agreement here. Here there is indeed "*no schism in the body.*" Every partisan of Paul or Apollos or Cephas joins heart and confession here: "*Jesus Christ is Lord.*" That shall one day be the confession of the whole sentient universe, in its every order of life and intelligence (Phil. ii. 11; cf. Isa. xlv. 23; Deut. v. 8). Some shall pay it even then with an enforced submission and homage. Now many hearts will neither render the submission nor accord the homage. In the days of His humbled estate and veiled glory, the evil spirits now and again would cry out, as He drew near to them or to their human "temples," "We know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God" (Mark i. 24; cf. "Jesus I recognise," Acts xix. 15). But the full force of the statement may well amount to something less than a proclamation of His Godhead. Rate its value high as we may, it was an admission rather than a confession. It was wrung out from fear, and from the unholy recoil of evil at the very touch and presence of goodness; and it may be that it had often not a little malice in it, as an attempt to force on a premature avowal of Himself on the part of Jesus. He at least refused such testimony to Himself. (Cf. Peter's "Depart from me, for," etc., Luke v. 8.) A confession bursts irrepressibly forth from the reverent, trusting, adoring heart of a believer taught by the Spirit. The admission of the Galilæan demons had in the heart of it a curse. The lips said, "Thou art the Holy One of God"; the heart said, "*Anathema be this Jesus!*" The words here used suggest a strange scene in the little meeting-place of the Church at Corinth. "The prophets are prophesying" together (cf. 1 Sam. xix. 20 *sqq.*); "a spirit" comes upon or enters into another worshipper, and he too shows all the outward accompaniments of the illapse of the prophetic Spirit. The "*discerners of spirits,*" with their intuitive perception [the Holy Ghost in one gift recognises Himself in every other], are perhaps absent. The new "*prophet*" is not at once to be "*discerned*" by the character of his utterances; they seem harmless, if not very profitable. But some hearts are not satisfied, and they inquire, "Wilt thou say, '*Jesus is Lord*'?" And the mask is dropped: "Lord? No! *Anathema!*" Or, the Christian hymn is being uplifted; the men endowed with "*tongues*" are glorifying in ecstatic praise God and His Christ; when suddenly a discord in the music! A scream of hate and rage cuts athwart the praise: "*Jesus is Anathema!*" That is no prophet whose gift is of the Spirit! It needs no special *charism* to "discern the spirit" in such a man. Less aggravated forms of this Jesus-hate were found then, and might be found now, in the Jewish synagogue. Here is a poor young girl who is denounced, or suspected, as a Nazarene. She is brought before the rulers of the synagogue. The test is short and simple: "Call this Jesus the Nazarene 'Absalom'; call Him 'The Hanged-one' [Gallows-bird!]; call Him 'the Bastard Branch'; curse Him; say that He is anathema!" Happy if, by some miracle of holy courage, the young heart does not quail, or if, while the lips blench with the strain of excitement, they will shape none of the accursed words. See her stand there, and at last break her silence in response to threatening, or warning, or appeal, with the cry of passionate devotion: "**Jesus** is **Jehovah**!" [How they would have got their answer, clear and sudden, from

Paul of Tarsus, if conceivably they had put him to their test. "Call him 'Anathema'!" Not anger, but conviction and love, make his voice ring out: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let *him*—not Jesus—be anathema!" Speaking of the stories of Jesus in the Talmud, Dr. Geikie says: "Against (Him) no slander is too gross to be retailed by the Rabbis" (*Life of Christ*, ii. 624).] And yet more subtilly does the presence of the same aversion which may deepen into antipathy to Christ, betray itself in ordinary, decent men and women of to-day. No man who knows himself but remembers the averting of heart from Christ which made His name unwelcome, and aroused a real resentment, when His claims on heart and life were pressed with more earnestness than usual. What spirit is that? It is the fashion to exalt the character of the Man, the Teacher, the Universal Brother and Pattern, Jesus. But to accept and own practically His "*Lordship*"—that is another matter. To own that as a creed, indeed, did once become almost an epidemic fashion in stormy days in Constantinople, till one could hardly ask a carpenter or a shoemaker the simplest question about his trade and work without drawing forth by way of reply some fierce "Athanasian" sentence about the Trinity and the Godhead of the Son. But give the natural heart time and room to "grow" its tendencies to full blossom and fruit, remove the restraints of education and of conventional propriety or fear; men may then come to the rabid, destructive hate of Christianity and things Christian which not only disfigures the pages of some who ought to be calmly scientific writers, but which, in some times of Continental upheaval, has dared bitter words, and done black deeds, against everything of God and His Christ. How the natural heart will tolerate any religion which is content to be a mere set of opinions with no practical bearing upon life. English "good society" will play at Mahometanism, or at Buddhism—"esoteric" or other—or at Romanism or at "being High Church." But as to taking up Christianity as a "craze"! Why, the thing insists on being *lived out*! Insufferable! Nor is it enough to say that this a revolt against any one particular presentation of Christianity and against its priesthood. It has in it the germ of that hatred of good as good, that hatred of God Incarnate which went at least near to ripening into the unpardonable "blasphemy against the Holy Ghost" [Matt. xii. 30, 31; so closely connected with His sharply divisive word: "He that is not with Me is **against Me**!"] So, by a converse but analogous process, there is a Spirit—the Holy One—behind every real confession of the Lordship of Christ. "*Flesh and blood*" do not reveal this doctrine, nor reveal Him, to men. There is a knowledge of Christ which is part of the new world into which that man has passed who is himself made "*a new creature*" (2 Cor. v. 16, 17). The burst of revelation which came to Peter—or rather the sudden flash of insight which showed in Peter—near Cæsarea Philippi (Matt. xvi. 16, 17); the sudden, overwhelming access of knowledge which silenced all the tests and requirements that Thomas was going to propose and insist upon, and left him with only one thing to do, only one thing to say—to fall prostrate and cry, "My Lord and my God!" [which is the manifest, (and if the word be permissible) the artistic, climax to the Gospel of John;—the confession of John the Baptist and of Nathanael, in chap. i., lead up, through a succession of confessions, to this of Thomas, the last, most definite, most full, in its recognition of Christ as Lord];—these are distinctly *grace*,—"*spiritual* things" (ver. 1). The "*faith*" of ver. 9 is indeed pretty certainly shown by its companion "*gifts*" to be miracle-working faith (cf. under Critical Notes). Yet it is only one phase, one operative presentation, of a larger "*faith*," of which in every sense it is true that it is "*by the same Spirit*." In ver. 9 it is a *Hand* thrust into the unseen, "*spiritual*" world and grasping there the God from Whom it draws power for mighty works. But it is also,

and more widely, true that it is an Eye to whose gaze all that world stands unveiled, "naked and open" as we are to the gaze of God. It begins already "to know even as we are known" (xiii. 11). And the opened Eye is one of the gifts of the Spirit through Whose quickening men already "pass from Death unto Life." Life has come into Death; the dead eye now lives and can see. Hence John's close association of being "born of God" with "believing that Jesus is the Christ." Or, as he gives it in varying statements: "Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" Or, again: "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God" (1 John v. 1, 5, iv. 15). No merely doctrinal "confession" or "faith" satisfies such statements. The stoutest and most orthodox champion of the Godhead of Jesus, whether against old Socinian, or later Unitarian, or modern Naturalistic, may, nevertheless, be no man "*born of God.*" Orthodoxy and Regeneration in such vital association make "orthodoxy" something far higher, deeper, than a matter of creed. The only man who *knows* a Divine Christ is the man who is "in Christ." Other men may master the sections in the "Handbooks of Theology," the "Institutes," or the like, headed "Divinity of Christ"; they may become past-masters in the controversial literature of the topic; they may know completely the accustomed collection and formulation of the scattered and often inferential *data*, which, when marshalled in due order, are the basis of the doctrine; they may be expert of fence in dealing with the difficulties and the criticisms of the objector; weighing Scripture statements for, and the passages which in Scripture itself seem to be against; they may come up to the assured intellectual position that Revelation makes "*Jesus Lord.*" But even then they do not know Him; the belief which intellect has built up, intellect may destroy; the argumentative balance may by new considerations be made to turn against the doctrine; the Lordship of Jesus is only rooted in the surface stratum of their manhood; a storm of sceptical attack may uproot it. The spiritual man does not undervalue the arguments; they are most likely the ladder by which he climbed to the level of a true faith. They made him ready to believe. But he has now a direct intuition of Jesus as Lord, which he shares with ten thousand others, most of whom know nothing, nor can know, of the arguments. The same Spirit Whose indwelling in Him makes him live, makes the regenerate man know Christ and His Lordship. [Cf. another case of apparent connection of "salvation" with the acceptance of an historical proposition: "God raised Him from the dead;" and of a theological dogma: "I confess Jesus as Lord" (Rom. x. 9). Of course "with the heart" makes all the difference. As here] the truth accepted into the creed also passes into, and is assimilated and reproduced in, the experience. The inward, spiritual life echoes and reproduces the outward, historical, Christian verity. Christ's development of God's word "in the Bush" (Matt. xxii. 32) brought out the profoundly fundamental truth that for God to say "I am Abraham's God," involved a natural capability of such a relation which is unshared by the brute creation, and which argued a soul not "dead and done with"; and further implied an actual, spiritual covenant relationship between God and the man. So for a man to say in any real sense, "*Jesus is Jehovah,*" he must have come a long way to have reached that point, and the truth must now carry him a long way further. To him "to live" must be, in fact, "**Christ.**" It will mean such a trust, such an habitual dependence, such a new principle of covenanted, faithful obedience, as the heart only renders to God when it has become "a new heart." And it comes as a new revelation, (to speak inexactly) a fresh disclosure, to each man who comes to the saving knowledge of the truth. The man who knows Jesus *his* "*Lord*" knows also that he never said it or believed it to any practical intent until he learned it as a sinner

"*by the teaching of the Spirit of God.*" The Spirit's work is to testify of Christ. He is the great Preacher of Christ. He has but the one theme—**Christ.** And He has wrought in the Church of Christ, in all the ages and races and communions, a wonderful unity in the testimony, "*Jesus is Lord*"! The voice of the much-divided Church is one here! 5. *Theology*, more theology, always theology, *underneath all the facts* and teachings *about the spiritual* life! The theology may be presented by itself, as the skeleton may be dissected out from the body, and exhibited alone. But it is a hard, ugly thing; as the theology which is the "bony" frame giving shape and strength to vers. 4-6, may be made to seem. Underneath the most noble form, underneath the most beautiful face, are a skeleton and a grinning skull. So we may not have the verses and their teaching, *we may not have the experimental unity, without the Trinity.* [Good example this of Pauline passages which assume the "Dogma," and are Trinitarian in underlying, essential structure. Usually the Trinity is barely seen in the New Testament except in connection with Redemption.] "*The Spirit*," "*the Lord*," "*God.*" Here again there is order in the equality; there is diversity in the unity. It is not overpressing the suggestion of analogy between the Unity of the Godhead and the Unity of the Body: "That they may be one, *even as* we are one" (John xvii. 22). "All the capacities come from one Spirit; the different kinds of service are for the same Master; and the different results are produced by the same First Cause" (Beet). From one Source; under one Ruler; all, ultimately, through one God. It is the unity of streams which all derive precisely similar waters from the one fountain; of troops of different arms and training, fitted for different service, under the orders and fulfilling the plan of the same Captain; or of many classes of servants under the same great Master of the house; of living ones whose life and all its activities come from the vivifying, inworking hand of the one Living God. At how many points are the many units summed up; at how many points of *rapport* do the diversified hosts of the Christian army find themselves in contact, *one host.* The unity goes down to the springs of the very principle of Life, for the Body and for the individual member; it mounts up to the One Lord Christ, towards Whom every heart, every face, every life, converges, with adoration paid to Him "as to God" [said Pliny's letter]; it broadens out until it takes into its holy compass and round all who in grace and gifts manifest the presence of the same Holy Ghost, all who serve for the love of the same Lord, all in whom stirs the same life of God. Blind they who "cannot see the wood for the trees," who cannot see The Church for looking at the Churches! Can they not verify the "*manifestations*" of the same Spirit? or ascertain that the "*ministrations*" are for and under the same Christ? Can they question whether the energy, in this and that Church or man so absolutely identical in all its effects, is of the same God?

C. **Dependence.**—*Inter*dependence—"*No need of thee!*" (ver. 21). That is not the voice of any component of the Body; it is not the intelligent voice of any member of *a* body. It sins against the very idea of an organism. And the Church is not an aggregation merely, like some chance heap of stones. It is not even an orderly structure merely, like a temple. The aggregation and order are those of an organic structure, those of a living organism. Put the statue of a man and a living man side by side, the very man (say) whose features and form and stature are copied, to the last degree of accurate correspondence. The one is made up of crystals, the other of living cells. How great the difference in the unity thus in each case set up. It may be mechanically an easier task to rend asunder cell from cell than crystal from crystal; more easy to damage the union and the unity of life than that of mere aggregation, though of the closest. [Against outward assault, the highly developed ecclesiastical, historic Church system is no doubt stronger in resisting power than the Church unity, whose one bond is an inner, vital one. The always dead, marble form persists

unaltered for ever; the dead, cell-built form, which once was living, disintegrates with accelerating rapidity, from the moment the life departs.] But notice how the unity ends, as it began, with the mere contact of neighbour with neighbour. Each crystal of the statue-form is self-contained and perfect in itself: "*I have no need of thee.*" It receives nothing from, it gives nothing to, the next crystal on every side of it. It is nothing to the next, except that it happens to be next. As there are "Churches" whose unity has shrunk to little more than this, a unity of aggregation within the same four walls, for worship or for the enjoyment of some one preacher who happens to catch the ear of them all; or to a still more attenuated unity of bare registration upon the same Church roll. Paul's frequent illustration of a temple is a little better. Upper stones are borne by those beneath them, and in their turn help to keep these in place, whilst also supporting others above themselves. Stone may lean against stone, and be upheld. But this "give and take" of support is mechanical, *and it is all.* It falls far short of that interchange of sympathy and help between the parts of a body, and between adjacent cells in the same organism, which makes the figure of "a body" so nearly perfect for the purpose of the Spirit's teaching about the interdependence of the members of The Body. "*God hath set the members in the body,*" and in The Body, that member may help, and be helped by, member. An independence which should refuse to give anything to another, or should attempt to hold itself aloof in self-centered, self-contained, self-sufficing fulness of life, is utterly alien from His idea. Such "Christians" could never make a Church. [A selfish absorbency which will take all that the Church, or any member, can give, and yet forgets, or indolently neglects, to give to any in return, is equally alien to the idea.] Independency and selfish, parasitic dependency, stand equally condemned by the very principle of a body. Every single member has something to give me, which I need from him; every single member may demand from me all I have which can serve him. The debt of member to member is often very closely brought home to the heart, by some relation of circumstances which binds together a couple such as would have been supposed to be hopelessly incongruous opposites, in age, in social standing, or education, or mental calibre. Every Church can show its happy examples of the gladly acknowledged obligation of the rich master to his godly servant's prayers and character; of the educated man's manifold debt to the unlettered but saintly, Christian neighbour, with whom some "happy accident" in the providence of God has somewhat closely associated him. On the other hand, there are found not a few homely men and women, with good sense enough very thankfully to draw inspiration and help from the evident firmness of belief and from the cultured godliness of some educated Christian whom they know. It is pride, not gratitude, which is restless under this sense of indebtedness. The grateful, cheerful acknowledgment, "*I have need of thee,*" is politically, socially, as well as in the Church, the saving law of all happy corporate, organised life. The association and the reciprocal helpfulness are indeed much wider than the simple couplet "*I . . . thee.*" Member does often help member, in charming examples of direct and close personal association. There is often a tenderness and a beauty, which are in themselves a strength and a help, about this more easily and vividly realised help of individual to individual, which, when the relation is rather that of one to a great Whole, is lost, or is hardly so powerful a motive or bond. When, man to man, "*the members have the same care one for another*"; when the Christian is drawn to, and helps, some particular fellow-Christian; it is gloriously, and very practically, true that he is helping the whole Church. Few hearts can embrace "The Church"; but we can "love the brother whom we have seen." Yet each may remember that the Whole does depend in some degree upon the One. No member but really puts something of value into the grand common stock,

whilst in turn it is helped from the common store. Thus **Dependence** passes over into—

D. **Serviceableness.**—Indeed, it has been difficult under C. not to anticipate D.

1. *A man's gift is not his own, alone or chiefly.* He is graced and gifted most of all for the sake of the common good and the common growth. The ideal of the Body's increase is not the independent and isolated growth of member and member, however perfect, each by itself working out its own development. Conceivably a hand might grow whilst its fellow-hand, or the foot, might linger at infantile strength or weakness. But such irregularly distributed growth might really disturb, not only the harmony, but the very unity of the body. No; the ideal is, "Till **we all** come—*pari passu*—to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"; *i.e.* each member sharing in, keeping pace with, the development of the whole, till Head and Members stand forth one Body, one "perfect Man," every part harmoniously and completely developed to manhood's scale of size and strength (Eph. iv. 13). Toward this tends all the variety and distribution of the "*spiritual* (things)" of ver. 1. It is designed for this. What one member is or has, or can do or be, or, under the training and discipline of the Spirit of God, can develop and can become,—all that is for the sake of all the rest. We may be sure it was pure instinct, however guided and organised, which originated the brief-lived community of goods in the sub-Pentecostal days in Jerusalem. The right heart of the "member" does not need schooling into this sharing of all the "good things" with which he himself is endowed. The very possession of any ability or faculty which can be laid under contribution for the welfare of a fellow-Christian or the Church, is in itself a claim for its use. The fitness for office is a call to undertake office. A hand ought to be doing a hand's work. "*To profit withal*" must not be misunderstood (ver. 7). As matter of exegesis the "*profit*" thought of by St. Paul is the profit of the whole, not of the man himself. This latter is true, and is closely linked with the former. (God always does make duty to others and to Himself to go hand in hand with blessing to the man himself.) For his own sake, certainly, should a man strive to be at his best, *his* best, the fullest development of which he is capable,—eye, hand, foot, whatever be his place and capacity in the body. The men in the Parable of the Talents profit, with equal fidelity and with proportionate success, by the talents entrusted to them. But they are simply salient instances sufficient to illustrate the Lord's principle. As a matter of fact, there will be many varying arrangements and gradations of faithfulness and increase. Five talents will sometimes only bring two, or even one, to the Master. Or, as in the complementary Parable of the Pounds, one talent may win two or even five. Each "member" should be growing to *his* best. He should be at his best for his own life's sake. But what Paul here says, is that *he should be at his best for Christ and for the body.* Talent, faculty, unimproved or only half cultivated, is a sin against that law of serviceableness which lies at the very root of the idea of "His Body, the Church." "Stir up the gift of God that is in thee," is not an advice for Timothy only (2 Tim. i. 6). A gift is a fire which needs feeding and "poking"; God kindles it, but the man must guard and stir up the holy fire; not merely or most that his own life may be warmed and cheered by the blaze, but that "the Body" may be blessed by the gift that is in him. The possession is obligation. A Christian man may not deliberate or choose whether he will or will not give himself to serve his Lord and the Church. In what way *he* can, in that way *he* ought. He was made what he is, that he may be serviceable. He will receive his reward. The health of each several member is but a particular instance of the healthy life-condition of the whole body. If the whole man be in poor health, the hand is feeble, the foot begins to fail. As the man recovers, so under all ordinary conditions the foot or hand

or eye renews its vigour. The most frequent form of the interdependence, as was shown above, is that which is mediate, through the body's well-being as a whole; to which the part contributes, and out of which it receives its supply of blessing. So then, he that is at his best for the sake of the Body has his reward; he is at his best for himself. If, therefore, a man would get the utmost of advantage *from* the Divine institute, a Church, let him do his utmost of service, and be at his best of spiritual health, *for* the Church. But, once more, it is not merely interest; it is obligation. The body lives and grows by the active serviceableness of every member, whatever some aberrant member may do. The *body* never says to a member, "*I have no need of thee.*" "What am I? Hand, or eye, or foot, or ear, or what? What can I do for the Body? 'Nothing?' No; I am '*set in the body*' with my own small capacity for something; I am not 'of no use.' Let the body, let the Head Himself, command me, and claim me, even me." "*Even* me;" this leads up to vers. 22-25. Ruskin has written his "Unto this last." These verses are, in the political economy of the Church's own life and social order, **the Spirit's "Unto this last.**" We have—

2. *The law of the least honourable; their real honour and their real obligation.*—(1) "*Less honourable*" is only by comparison true, and by accommodation. In the holy innocence of Eden all the body's life was honourable and holy. In the holy fellowship of "*the Body of Christ*" there is no member who is not honourable. Holiness and helpfulness, to the full of the capacity and opportunity—these are real honour. Poverty, or ignorance, or humble capabilities are no dishonour; these may set some lower in the scale, but they are degrees of nobility, *all* of them. The honour upon the Head runs down to the skirts of His raiment. One needs not to force Paul's analogy into minute and even unseemly detail, but his general drift is clear. The face may be left bare in its beauty or its rugged strength; it can take care for itself. But many another part needs defence and covering. There are men conspicuous in the Body, of conspicuous gifts; they show full in every eye. No fear but that they will be known and honoured. There, in them, the Body has its outlook upon the world; through them it communicates with the world. But for one, two, ten, such, there are the score, the hundred, the mass, of less-obtrusive gifts and position, never likely to attract much attention, or to win much applause, even from their fellows in the Body; and there are passive and quasi-internal, normally hidden, "organs" in the Body itself. Delicate, sensitive, easily hurt, incapable of self-defence, they need the shield of the stronger membership. There are feet and hands which must oft do rougher, laborious offices in the many-sided work of the Church, or even the drudgery of the carrying of the rest to the field of their "*more honourable*" toil. They can do no thinking, or organising, or governing; they must do the obeying and the executing of the orders of the "*comely*" and "*honourable*" parts. Or, like ear and eye, they can utter nothing, can originate nothing, they are silent and receptive; they can "*do* nothing," they are apt to say, nothing but receive light and sound for the guidance, the warning, the comfort of the rest. "*Less honourable*," perhaps, but still "*honourable.*" They are of the body; they are in the body for its service. That is their honour. The body needs them. (2) *They are necessary.* Indeed, perhaps one might push the figure so far as to say "*indispensably necessary.*" Certainly, in the actual physical structure, there are some small organs whose use is obscure; but he would be a bold, rash physiologist who should pronounce them superfluous, any smallest of them. Whilst we have been slowly and laboriously learning the function of this organ and the use of that part, they have been quietly doing their work and fulfilling their function, vindicating themselves as "wanted" in the whole economy of life. As certainly in the Body of Christ there are no *dispensable* members. The Body might live

and grow, of course, without any one of them. But it would, *pro tanto*, be with an impoverished life. No member "of *least* account" (vi. 4) in the Church can withdraw his help and contribution, without making the Church the poorer. Happy that Church and its officers who know how to prize the service and worth of those "*least honourable*"! They cannot fill the pulpit, but they can sustain the preacher with sympathy and prayer. They cannot do much towards replenishing the treasury, but their devotion, their steady, year-in-year-out attention to their own little bit of work is an inspiration, or perhaps a rebuke, to the large givers and the prominent office-holders. They can create "an atmosphere" in whose sweet and healthy peace pastors and leaders and "workers" can pursue their tasks with hope and vigour. How much does "The Church," in the largest sense, owe to its poor, to its pensioners, to the sick who can only suffer and pray, to the veterans who linger—not "lag superfluous"—upon the busy stage, where they can no longer play their active part, but where their very "style" is a formative tradition for the younger generation? These "*less honourable*" cannot do the fighting; they make no contribution to Apologetics. But they have *been* an "Apology for the Christian Religion" not easily ignored, less easily gainsaid or silenced. Written in no book, but exhibited in humble, "*humdrum*" lives. Without them the apologist defends Christianity in vain! How often life seems to have retreated to these hidden and humble members of the body, its last stronghold and safe asylum through days of widespread sickness or of epidemic worldliness! How often the quick spiritual "ears" have detected approaching mischief, which the bold, clear "eyes" ignored or disbelieved! There are a great host of members in the body who give it its sympathies, its sensibility, its heart; as there are many more who give, or who conduct and execute its plans and work. It were a hard, perhaps cruel, mighty machine without those; it were a weak, ineffectual thing without these. All are necessary; but the "*least honourable*" who are and who do that which brings little notice, and less public thanks and honour, are not "least necessary." Happy and wise the Church which takes care not only for the defence and sustenance of such, but which puts upon retiring worth, upon humble godliness, upon sanctified routine workers, "*more abundant honour*." On the whole topic it may be noted that when Menenius Agrippa availed himself of the figure of the Belly and the Members, to bring the Plebeians who had seceded to Mons Sacer (B.C. 494) into a humour to treat with the Patricians of the little Roman State; and when Plato illustrates a thought akin to that of our ver. 26 by the community of the whole body in the pain of the wound given to a finger; they are on the track of one of the great thoughts—the archetypal ideas—of God in His ordering of Creation. Nor have these two, or St. Paul, any claim to have "discovered" the significant serviceableness of the figure of a human body to teach the laws of all "social life." There would be as many such "discoveries," as in any age, or race, or school there were thinking men. It is a particular case of the great principle, that the ultimate reason why things are what they are, and as they are, and not other and otherwise, is revealed to us as,—"**Christ.**" "All things were created *in Him*." All the great thoughts of God have been perfectly spoken from the first in that "Word of God." But these so aptly parabolic physical facts of the natural world, are partial, prelusive, and, so to speak, stammering utterances of these same ideas. The great trunk lines of idea and purpose in Creation all converge upon, all lead up to, all meet in, Christ. They are but returning to their point of origin: "Of Him," originally, they are "unto Him" finally. Creation is full of Man from its earliest, geological antiquity onwards, upwards; and full of the Man (Heb. ii.) in Whom the ideal and history and destiny of Mankind are alone perfectly exhibited. The body's highest function and purpose is to "speak concerning Christ and His Church" (Eph. v. 32).

## SEPARATE HOMILIES.

Ver. 3. *Jesus the Lord.*

I. **This** singular **declaration** as to the essential evidence upon which Christianity rests **belongs to the earliest records of our faith.**—It was delivered at a time when the religion of Jesus was making its first attempts to convert men. Humanly speaking, it could not have been pronounced a success or a failure. Its Author had disappeared from earth about thirty-three years; and notwithstanding its swift propagation, and the unusual fervency and faithfulness of its disciples, the annals of sects would have cautioned a mere historian not too confidently to pronounce upon the ascending fortunes and future reign even of a religion so vastly superior to all other schools of theology and morals. Suppose Christianity, during the first two or three centuries, had failed. . . . *I can then imagine that its champions,* perceiving that their system could never be sustained by ordinary historic canons, *would affect to despise such* literal *standards, and appeal to the convenient authorities of the supernatural.* This, indeed, has been the course of several false religions; they have begun in myths, when life was simple and reason imperfect and credulous; but as the age became educated they evaded historic scrutiny by disclaiming history, and rested their claims for acceptance upon inspiration and revelation. *The realm of the supernatural has been the inaccessible retreat of the priesthood.* But the doctrines of our faith are not the accumulations of after thoughts, for the relief of priestly exigency. They were laid down once for all in the beginning of the Church, when that Church was an untried institute; and first and foremost among them was the Godhead of Jesus as a dogma based upon the evidence of inspiration.

II. **The man Jesus,** the Son of Mary, who lived in Palestine for thirty-three years; who acted as a man in connection with men, as a brother in the family of a house, as a human being in the functions of need and in the exigencies of distress; who at last died from the violence of murderous men; . . . *is the Lord.* . . . [Paul] meant all that was included in the *Jehovah* of the Old Testament. . . .

III. **This tremendous truth . . . cannot be accepted without Divine help.**—No man . . . can state it as the natural conviction of his judgment. The truth has a history, and yet history is not sufficient to demonstrate it. If it were clearly historic, it would never be disputed. When you tell me that Jesus Christ was born and lived in Palestine, and taught disciples, and died, I understand you; for you have narrated what appears to be a natural event. But when you tell me that Jesus is the Great God, . . . [and the Creator of all He saw and ate and used], . . . you transport me out from the sphere of intelligible statement and testimony into wonderland. I hear, but I understand not. . . . I do not mean that the Godhead of Christ is naturally inconceivable, or that the dogma itself shocks or violates my sense of what is possible, but simply that the doctrine is above me. I cannot reconcile it with the laws and impressions of nature as I know them. Say that Jesus was a man; . . . I will go to greater lengths of admiration than any other man ever commanded, for the greatest power earth has ever known or will know; but it must be human power. I can say he shall fill the domain alike of genius, science, empire; but I cannot say that Jesus is *God* unless you add some other power to my mind, or stimulate to unnatural intensity the powers I have. St. Paul affirms that no man can. . . . The history of controversy has repeated it in every age. It is echoed in every treatise of modern theological discussion. The intellectual spirit of the day is plainly in sympathy with it. No man in the merely natural circle of his attainments and convictions can say that Jesus is the Lord. Modern philo-

sophers maintain this . . . as if it had been left to *them* to discover; whereas Paul asserted it from the first. They tell us that the Incarnation is to the last degree unintelligible; that they prefer holding fast to what they know, to floating about in depths of mystic speculation. This jealous adherence to fact and distrust of faith, which is sometimes put forth as the latest scientific judgment upon the claims of Christianity, dates as far back as St. Paul; and he has described this temper of mind with as much candour and accuracy as if he had been a philosopher himself: "The natural man," etc. (ii. 14).

IV. **The evidence** by which this grand truth is affirmed . . . **is the internal persuasion of the Holy Ghost.** —Here we speak in parables to them that are without. The first step towards this confession is the conviction of *sin* by the Holy Ghost. I do not mean . . . of evil, wickedness, wrong. A man may be assured of these without any supernatural influence whatever; but a conviction of *sin*, of transgression against *God's law*, of liability to eternal death—no man can feel this unless the personal presence of God is brought home to him; and this cannot be except through the revelation of the Holy Ghost. The misery following such a conviction will make a man strive against it, and learn by bitter failures his perfect helplessness. He seeks rest, a place of firmness for his feet; but the ground gives way; he "sinks in deep mire." Preach Jesus to a man, with his guilt arrayed in terrors and his fears alarmed, with his self-despair and his eager cries for help, he not only sees no difficulty in accepting the Godhead of Christ, but he grasps it as the only truth that can give him comfort. A teacher of God can instruct him; a servant of God can intercede for him; an angel of God may minister with him: but the Son of God must *save* him. An inferior Christ would be nearer to him in rank, but a man Christ or an angel Christ would not be so near in sympathy as the Jehovah Christ. The soul bereaved of human help [finds] this the promise which lightens up her widowhood: "Thy *Maker* is thy husband." That which makes Jesus our final resting-place is His *Godhead*; it is His equality with the Father which gives His blood an omnipotent potency as an atonement, which makes His priesthood irresistible and eternal, His presence illimitable.

V. **How easy** for those whom the Holy Ghost has convinced of *sin*, who under the tyranny of its power have imagined what a counter-power that must be which could redeem us from it, **to admit that Jesus is God.** . . . It is still all mystery to us; and yet it seems natural, as if it could not but have been. It wears a familiar face. Like the mysterious world of nature around us, which, because we are part of it, looks very homely to us. . . . With our eyes open and our hearts touched by the revealing Spirit, we feel that we belong to the Gospel world; we are the active and intelligent recipients of its laws and blessings. Its stupendous wonders, although far distant from our comprehension, seem almost close to us in the clear atmosphere of a fellow-sympathy. They are ours, and we are theirs. The incarnation of God is the inscrutable event of the universe. And yet we have seen it with our eyes; we have looked upon, and our hands have handled it; our very children sing about it as if they understood it perfectly.—*Abridged from report of a sermon by E. E. Jenkins, M.A.*

Ver. 27. *The Body of Christ.*

Observe, not merely, "Ye are a body"; though that has been the burden of the chapter. The *give and take* of support, and sympathy, and service, between part and part; the interdependence of part and part for life and growth; the diversity of capacity and function, all contributing to the welfare of the whole and of each part; all have been dwelt upon fully. All are as true of any organised society, any corporate life, as of the Church of Christ. But

this is *only what the members are to each other.* Here Paul goes further. "Ye are *a* body; ye are *Christ's* body; ye are a Body united to Him; ye are a body for Him; ye furnish Him with an instrument analogous to your own. What your body is to, and for, you; that ye are to, and for, Christ." Most simply, then—

I. **To us a body is the link between us and the outer world.**—It mediates between the immaterial part in us and the material existences outside us. The immaterial in one man communicates with the immaterial in another through their two bodies. [If there be a "*trans-* or *extra-*corporeity of mind," it is so obscure a fact as not yet to serve much in even an analogical way of imparting truth.] Such analogies may not be pressed far, but hold good thus far: We influence the outer world through the instrumentality of our bodily part; the outer world is known to us and affects us largely through the organs and sensations of our body. In somewhat similar fashion is Christ pleased that His Church should be a Body for Him, mediating between Him and the World. In one particular also the World reaches Him through His Body. Take this latter first. (1) "Why persecutest thou Me?"—not "My people." Saul reaches further, deeper, than he thought, as he "hales men and women to prison," or "consents to" the stoning of Stephen, "persecuting the Way unto the death." Not the hand or foot alone is touched or wounded; the Head is hurt; Christ feels the pain. The sufferings of the martyrs are the "afflictions of Christ" in a remarkable passage (Col. i. 24; cf. 1 Pet. iv. 13); as though [in opposition to "*began* to do and to teach," if that be the accepted meaning, Acts i. 1] Christ not only continued to do and to teach, but *also to suffer*, after "the day in which He was taken up." As though His earthly life of a few years and His Church's life of many centuries were one life, and one history, both of work and persecution; the centuries a continuation, an extension, of the thirty years; He assuming to Himself all the pain, as well as the toil and the success, of the Church's life. The first Adam and his race fell as one; the second Adam and the new race of those who are "in Him" rise as one; *they suffer as one.* The old doctrine of (so-called) federal headship, or (in the modern phrase) the solidarity of successive generations, is an attempt to express particular phases of the great principles underlying this: "Touch a Christian, burn him, wrong him, persecute or hate him, you touch, burn, wrong, persecute, hate, Christ." Let persecutor and persecuted remember that He is to be taken into the account. (2) With freer use of the analogy, it may be said Christ reaches the world through His Body, through the activities of His Church. Whether man can act upon man and upon matter otherwise than though the body's powers and organs, may be open to discussion upon carefully gathered evidence. There is no doubt that Christ can, and does. There is a sovereignty about times of visitation to Churches and to nations and generations; Christ sends forth wide influence, when the Church has asked little, done less, or herself been a *Body out of health*, too feeble to effect, or to initiate, anything. He is independent of His Body, as we are not of ours. Yet He does not only make large use of this His organ and instrument, but was largely pleased to make His work depend upon, and be conditioned by, and executed through, the activities of His people. As the body is *organic* to the man, so the Church is *organic* to Christ. Every member of a body is under the control of the will of the man. So the indwelling Christ rules in, as well as over, every member of His body. Humanly speaking, if the Church is not active, the world goes unreached, unsaved. Its activities are His, and are the usual and ordinary ones through which He expresses and effects His will and purpose in the salvation of the world.

II. Hence 1. The **responsibility**

**lying upon the Church** always to be at its best of spiritual force and health, a fitting, serviceable instrument always ready to the will of the Head. 2. A ready test is provided, distinguishing between right and wrong activities of His Church. In what enterprises should it engage,—and in what *not*? What work should it, or should it not, undertake or be led into? Can the enterprise, the work, the activity, whether in fact or in proposal, be conceivably attributed to Christ Himself, and identified with Him? Could it be His activity? Within the limit thus to be traced out, activities and work are *permissible*. It may be a matter for further temporary or prudential limitation, whether the whole liberty shall be availed of; whether, *e.g.*, all such social, humanitarian, philanthropic forms of service to man, as are perfectly conceivable as Christ's own, shall be formally undertaken as part of the organised activities of a particular Church, or of The Church. There may be reasons rooted in the facts of fallen human nature, it may be part of the inevitable defect of the reality from an ideal condition of things, why, *e.g.*, a Church "cannot," without injury to its distinctively "spiritual" life or work, embark in any extended plan for the better housing of the poor, or in a great effort to purify the popular amusements, or itself to purvey purer ones. [If Christian men and women undertake such work, outside the machinery and organisations of their own particular Church or congregation, "*The* Church which is His Body" is really doing it.] It is palpably incongruous that some forms of amusement and of money-raising should be attached to the Church and its enterprises; they could not conceivably be attributed to Christ; they cannot be the action of His Body. 3. On the other hand, the principle makes some forms of activity obligatory upon the Church, and upon the Churches. *E.g.* can anything else be supposed but that Christ should desire His Gospel carried to the heathen, and to all lands where, if in name it is proclaimed, it has no real regenerating power upon society or upon individuals? The obligation of Missions, "Home and Foreign," upon the Church of Christ can never be an open question. He *must* desire it; His Body is not revealing, or expressing, Him if it is not actively, aggressively "missionary." 4. No doubt some deep connection between character and bodily form. Between character and face there is obviously often no little relation. An artist knows—without accepting the follies of palmistry—that there is character, *the* character, individuality, in the hands. By no means unimportant in his portrait. Perhaps an ideal corporeity would with perfect correspondence express the man, and men might know each other by their form. [Note, the "form of God"; and the old philosophic meaning and use of "form."] However that be, it is no speculation that Christ's Body, and every part of it, should express Him. There are, happily, Christian men and women in whom every one, who comes into contact with them, feels he has come into close contact with, has seen, Christ. The obligation not to misrepresent Him, the obligation to represent Him, lies upon the Church, because it is His Body. Hearts are asking, the world is asking, "We would see Jesus." It ought to be possible to say, "Look at His Body."

III. **This relation to Christ differentiates the Church from all other corporations.**—1. It is not merely one amongst many societies and organised associations of the same order. No doubt He Who is the Ruler of human society and its every movement, takes care that no form of association between man and man but has the control of His hand. It subserves His purposes. It has a real relation to Him. But this corporation is unique. It has a unique relation to Him. He has assumed it into union with Himself. He is "Head *over* all things" for His body's sake. "He is the Head *of* the Church." Himself dwells in every

member, as (to speak with caution) the man dwells in every organ, part, cell, of *his* body. It is a spiritual corporation. 2. An available test is in this provided, as to the legitimacy or otherwise, of methods for securing its growth and increase. "Can Christ and His Body, Christ *in* His Body, be conceived of as securing, *e.g.*, numerical increase by the method actually practised, or proposed?" Growth in numbers, wealth, social *status*, political influence, may or may not be matters of rejoicing. They, and their causes, and methods, need bringing to the bar of a fine "spiritual" instinct, and trying there. They may be the very methods for a purely human society or enterprise; but can they be the methods of Christ and His Body?

## *HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.*

Ver. 20. *A Living Unity requires:*—

**I. The combination of many members.**

**II. The harmonious arrangement of parts.**

**III. The inspiration of one Spirit.**

**IV. Co-operation for one common end.**—[*J. L.*]

Vers. 22-25. Observe:—

**I. Life in its many forms is a system of compensations.**

**II. These compensations are wisely and equitably balanced.**

**III. Are designed to promote contentment, harmony, mutual care.**—[*J. L.*]

Ver. 31. "*Something better than 'Best.'*"

[Not very accurate: "*best*" is really "*greater.*" So "*covet*" is "*desire earnestly.*" See this word in noteworthy contrast with "*love*" in xiii. 4, its bad side there being put foremost. It may be studied in Acts vii. 9; 1 Cor. xiv. 1, 39; 2 Cor. xi. 2; Gal. iv. 17, 18 (with a playing upon its Janus-like ambiguity of meaning); Jas. iv. 2; Rev. iii. 19.] The whole verse is well paraphrased in the resuming verse, xiv. 1. Two contrasts:—

I. "*Gifts*" and "*way.*"—Respectively accidents of life, these; exceptional; given to the few. The "*way*" is for all, for all time; it is the very path of life. Love, even in the natural sense, is the one thing which makes life worth living. It is the life of life. A loveless life, with all natural endowments highly cultivated with all social accessories which are usually accounted desirable, to the true, whole, healthy manhood, is Death.

II. "*Covet*" and "*follow after*" (xiv. 1).—A passionate wooing; a quiet, persistently faithful wooing. The one is apt to be "jealous" as well as "zealous"; envious rather than emulous of the gifts of others. The other welcomes all, and makes room for all.

III. Love, without gifts, will, in the long-run, do more than gifts without love.

## *APPENDED NOTES.*

It may be convenient for the Bible-class to have the New Testament material about Prophets and Prophecy at one view.

(*a*) **Spoken of** in Eph. ii. 20, iv. 11; 1 Cor. xii. 28.

(*b*) John and Christ ante-Pentecostal "prophets." After Pentecost given to many (Acts ii. 17, 18, viii. 17, xix. 6, x. 44-46, xi. 45). **Individual cases** are: [Barnabas (Acts iv. 36, connecting παράκλησις with "*paraclete*"); Stephen (vi. 5, 10, 55);] Agabus (xi. 28, xxi. 10); Silas and Judas (xv. 32); Manaen and Lucius of Cyrene (xiii. 1); [Timothy, "a man of [illegible]" (1 Tim. vi. 11);] Philip's daughters (xxi. 9); Saul (xiii. 1, though some in this list may only be "*teachers*"). **Met with in Churches.**—Thessalonica (1 Ep. v. 20; where the gift was perhaps at a discount and "*despised*" as not so striking and showy as, say, "*tongues*"); Corinth (xii., xiv.); Rome, as yet unvisited by any apostle (xii. 6); Ephesus (iv. 11).

(*c*) **Nature of gift exemplified in New Testament.**—*A predictive power:* famine in

days of Claudius (Acts xi. 27-30), [xx. 23]; xxi. 4 [disciples elevated into prophets *for the occasion*, like so many in the regal period in the Old Testament]; xxi. 10-14; [1 Tim. iv. 1]. *Knowledge of distant future* to encourage the Church under present trial: 2 Pet. i. 16, etc.; 1 Cor. xiii. 9-12; ii. 9, 10 is a quasi-prophetic utterance founded on Isa. lxiv. 4, etc.

(*d*) Indicated in Luke xi. 49 ("prophets and apostles"); Matt. xxiii. 34, 37; (1 Thess. ii. 15; Jas. v. 10; Rev. xx. 9).

(*e*) Suggested in Rom. xvi. 25; Eph. iii. 5.

(*f*) **False prophets** speaking under demoniac agency: 1 Cor. xii. 3; Col. ii. 18; 1 Tim. iv. 1; 1 John iv. 1-3.

(*g*) To be tested by the "*analogy of faith*" (Rom. xii. 6); or as in 1 Cor. xii. 3, or 1 John iv. 1, 2; prophets may "*judge*" prophets (1 Cor. xiv. 29); the true gift is under a prophet's control, and is no mere uncontrollable maniac possession.

(*h*) Add to (*e*), which in itself would give a very incomplete view of prophecy:—

Prediction was only an accident of Prophecy; it might be there, or it might not, as it happened. Some prophetic books of the Bible manifestly contain many prophecies —many more predict but seldom. The prophecy which, for example, in these Corinthian Epistles we see in lingering survival in the Christian Church, is hardly prediction at all. More often it would be better described as specially inspired preaching. What Christians in Corinth needed was not so much an unveiling of the future, though this had its helpfulness, and is exemplified in many cases noticed in the list above given, but rather an authoritative statement of the mind and will of God for their guidance in the present. They needed Preachers rather than Seers of the Future. So, in fact, all the prophets, Old Testament and New Testament alike, were first of all, and most of all, preachers declaring "present truth" to the men of their own time. It might happen, and in point of fact generally did happen, that this present truth was also eternal truth. Their message was then one for every age, and was put upon permanent record, especially when the word of the prophet was part of the ever-growing disclosure of and preparation for the Advent of a Redeemer. Then, further, their teaching was often illustrated by or conveyed in significant Facts. These might be facts of their own day, in which case the prophets became inspired chroniclers and historians, recording, and often commenting upon, what was even then becoming the Past. But they wrote history *didactically*; they delivered a message from God through the vehicle of history. Sometimes, and particularly when they were contributing to the divinely authentic account of Redemption, its purpose and historical development, their message could not be completely illustrated or delivered without bringing in the facts of the Future, and then they uttered predictions. But the prediction was also *didactic* in its purpose. When fulfilled, the predictions become credentials of the men and of the Book which contained their utterances. But the crowning utility of predicted facts is for teaching, and pre-eminently for teaching something new about Christ and His Redemption work. It was teaching by divinely anticipated History. Silas, *e.g.*, as a prophet has his Old Testament counterparts in the many in the "schools of the prophets" who did their work and delivered their message of God's truth without predicting at all. In Acts xxi. 4 are simple disciples elevated, for the occasion, into prophets, in close correspondence with the not few examples, particularly frequent in the books of Kings and Chronicles, of men on whom once, and once only, in their life there came down the Spirit of prophecy,—predictive prophets for the occasion, and for that only. In fact, the "prophets" and the "prophecy" of the New Testament must not be studied apart from those of the Old Testament; they are one continuous fact. But as we see it in the later pages of the Bible, it is a good illustration of the "law" that, however great may be the dispensation change at any point, God does not pass from "age" to "age" in history *per saltum* and abruptly. Between one "age" and the next, however revolutionary may be the change made, there are overlapping, persistent, lingering facts, for a time surviving the "age" of which they were specially characteristic. We see the line and the date of demarcation between Judaism and Christianity; the day of Pentecost is the definite beginning of the Christian Church. But this stands prefaced on the one side by the transitional three years' ministry of Christ, and followed on the other by a few years during which the Jewish Temple and ritual linger on, dying and *effete* it is true, but hiding from the eyes of the contemporaries of the great change of "ages" the full significance of much that was taking place around them. In like manner Old Testament prophecy for a time lingers on, overlapping into Christianity, with its fuller gift of the Spirit. As the *corpus* of redemption facts and of redemption doctrine hastens to its completion, the office of the prophet [and Inspiration and Miracle also, in their proper definition and limitation as parts of and accompaniments of the Revelation of Redemption] is ceasing to be required. The "*teacher*" is more and more being left in possession of the field. "The apostles and *prophets*" are made the foundation of the Church, or its lowest courses of masonry resting on *the* Foundation, because the "prophets" were the one feature of the new order which most

conspicuously linked it with the old to which the Jewish converts had belonged (Eph. ii. 20).]

1. *As to the Gift of Tongues, our chief data* are: (*a*) Mark xvi. 17, "They shall speak with [new; ? the reading] tongues." (*b*) Acts ii. 1-13. (*c*) Acts x. 46, "They of the circumcision . . . with Peter . . . heard them (*i.e.* Cornelius and the rest) speak with tongues, and magnify God." (*d*) Acts xix. 6, When Paul laid his hands on the Johannean disciples at Ephesus, "they spake with tongues and prophesied." (*e*) 1 Cor. xii., xiv.

2. If in (*a*) "*new*" be retained, then there would appear to be some, but not much, support given to the idea of the Greek fathers that the gift was one of new linguistic powers. The Old Testament quotation in 1 Cor. xiv. 21 may look in the same direction (but see Critical Notes there). In (*b*) there is clearly a distinction between the first outburst of "*other* (N.B. this) *tongues*" (ver. 4), and the address of Peter, which may well have been in Aramaic. After (*b*) there is no semblance of evidence of any added linguistic powers being given or needed. Greek and Aramaic would carry the Christian teachers almost anywhere. In Acts xiv. 11 Paul seems not to have used the "*speech of Lycaonia*," nor perhaps to have understood the people until their acts showed their meaning.

3. The work, *not of instruction*, but of adoration, prayer, praise, seems in every case to have been the employment of the gift. Paul evidently relied on "*prophesying*" (xiv. 1) and "*teaching*" as means of producing conviction. "*Tongues*" were only for "*a sign*," to attract, and impress, the attention of the unbelieving world (xiv. 22).

4. "*Interpretation of the tongues*" was, perhaps, from the nature of the case, in Acts ii. no "spiritual gift." At Corinth it ordinarily required to be so, whether they were "*tongues of men*," which happened to be unknown to the Corinthians, or "*tongues of angels*," sounding like (incoherent?) noises, and belonging to no earthly dialect.

5. The *word* "*tongue*" (γλῶττα) *decides nothing* as to the nature of the gift, though in Acts ii. 8 it does seem equivalent to "*language*" (διάλεκτος). Also the same word is used (Acts ii. 4, 14) both of the speech of the gifted ones and of the address of Peter. In the LXX. it is used (in 1 Chron. xxv. 1; Ezek. xiii. 9) for "a musical, oracular intonation" (Smith, *Bible Dict.*). *Some of the external accompaniments* of the gift are suggested by the word "*mad*" (1 Cor. xiv. 23); and by a comparison of Acts ii. 13, "filled with new wine," with Eph. v. 18.]

[Stanley thus well combines the particulars contained in xii., xiv., etc.: "It was a trance or ecstasy, which, in moments of great religious fervour, especially at the moment of conversion, seized the early believers; and this fervour vented itself in expressions of thanksgiving, in fragments of psalmody or hymnody (? this) or prayer, which to the speaker himself conveyed an irresistible sense of communion with God, and to the bystander an impression of some extraordinary manifestation of power, but not necessarily any instruction or teaching, and sometimes even having the appearance of wild excitement, like that of madness or intoxication. It was a most emphatic sign to each individual believer that a power mightier than his own was come into the world" (Stanley, p. 257).]

"*Schism*" *and* "*Heresy*."—"There are some important principles which are now generally accepted. These two violations of unity generally go together: the "heresy" being self-willed choice of private interpretation in opposition to Scripture, and the "schism" the following of a party. Few schisms can be named which have not been the result of doctrinal error; few leading heresies which have not issued in schisms. Here, however, there is a distinction. Heresy can never be perpetuated; but the result of schisms may. Ecclesiastical schism may be taken up by Divine wisdom into the development of the kingdom of Christ; having been in fact not schism in the sight of God, or soon losing the taint. Apparent schism may be the only cure of heresy. Many minor heresies may co-exist with holding the Head. But where, on the one hand, there is such infidel subtraction from the truth, or, on the other, such superstitious addition to it, as neutralise the fundamentals, separation may be inevitable and lawful. . . . Schism may be the sin of the community left as well as of the community leaving. But all this rises to the higher principle that the Spirit is the Giver of life corporate as well as individual. He quickeneth whom He will. The body is more than its raiment. Any such act of the sovereign Spirit must aim at the more effectual growth of the Church. He thus prevents unity from degenerating into stagnant uniformity. . . . Lastly, whenever the Spirit thus goes out of His way to divide existing Churches, He never fails to authenticate His own act; as Paul among the apostles was able to authenticate his vocation and work. As to heresy or self-willed and needless schism it is still one of the *works of the flesh* (Gal. v. 19), condemned of itself." (Pope.)]

# CHAPTER XIII.

## *CRITICAL NOTES.*

**1.** These need be very few; the language of the chapter is of the simplest, the thought inexhaustibly full. 2. Note, Paul, not John, writes this chapter on **Love.** 3. The "I" is not so much personal, as the ideal of a Christian life personified. 4. Connect closely with, begin reading at, xii. 31. Also, go on from ver. 13 to xiv. 1. Thus, then, the whole scheme of thought is: "Desire earnestly the greater gifts. Yet I show you something still greater, better. Look at **Love**! Love It. Covet It. Follow after It. Yet, as I was just now saying, desire earnestly the greater gifts, but Prophecy more than they." The Order of Preference will therefore be: (1) Prophecy rather than Tongues or the like Charisms; (2) Love rather than even Prophecy, and much more than Charisms. 5. "**Love,**" of course, throughout. "Charity" is the Vulgate, and quasi-ecclesiastical, word; used in systems of Morals with a nearly technical sense. Our "*charity*" is in ver. 3; and, less exactly, in ver. 5,—"not provoked," "thinketh no evil."

Ver. 1. **Tongues.**—Connect with the "tongues" of, *e.g.*, chap. xiv. **Tinkling.**—*Clanging* (R.V.); *q.d.* incoherent *noise*, as opposed to the ordered, significant "speech" of real *music.* Tongues, prophecy, knowledge, faith,—most nearly to be desired as permanent endowments of the Church, but—*nothing* without love.

Ver. 2. Perhaps Prophecy an *occasional* gift only; Knowledge a *permanent* one. **Knowledge.**—As in i. 5, etc. **Faith.**—Not *saving* faith—that always works by *love* (Gal. v. 6); but such faith as Samson's or Gideon's; such as in Mark xi. 22, 23. **All.**—As usual with St. Paul (*e.g.* 1 Tim. i. 16), "all kinds, and all degrees of every kind." **Remove mountains.**—Familiar phrase to Paul, Rabbinically trained, as used of Rabbis eminent for acute or subtle judgment, enabling them to clear up difficult questions or solve the knotty points of Rabbinical disputations. But here, with the larger sense of Christ's use of the words, Matt. xvii. 20, xxi. 21. **Nothing.**—I become before God, and in reality, what I was once in the judgment of the world (i. 28).

Ver. 3. **Give my body.**—Very expression in Dan. iii. 28, LXX. Cases in 2 Macc. vii. 5; Jos., *Wars*, VII. 8, 7. There had not at this date been any Christian martyrdoms by fire. Note the variant reading.

Ver. 4. **Suffereth long.**—"Longanimity" rather than "Magnanimity." Look at Jas. v. 7 (same word as here, twice); Luke xviii. 7. **Puffed up.**—As you Corinthians are (iv. 6, 18, 19, v. 2, viii. 1).

Ver. 5. **Seeketh not its own.**—Phil. ii. 21; also x. 23, 34. **Easily.**—Omit this; as, in similar case, "without a cause" (Matt. v. 22). Looks as if the simple statement of Scripture were too strong meat for some early transcribers! **Thinketh.**—Reckons, and reckons with; keeps no account of evil actually done or said; never assumes, or supposes, or infers, or expects evil, as a factor in reckoning or judging of men and conduct. [Perhaps also *actively*, as in Homily below.]

Ver. 6.—Notice (R.V.) *in* unrighteousness, *with* the truth. More accurate. Love stands by the side of, and has fellowship with, truth. If it were (*per impossible.*) to rejoice in unrighteousness, it would stand apart from it, even in its joy.

Ver. 7. **Beareth.**—Better than "covereth"; well illustrated in Paul himself (ix. 12). **Endureth.**—Same root as in word for "patience"; in New Testament always more than "submits to," even if smoothly; "pressing on, and bearing up" (T. T. Lynch). Faith, Hope, Patience, in this sentence.

Ver. 8.—No verbal contrast (such as in A.V.), "faileth . . . shall fail." Words different. "Faileth . . . shall be done away," So at end of verse, and in ver. 10. Favourite word of Paul's (almost exclusively). Worth while looking at Rom. iii. 3, 31, iv. 14, vi. 6, vii. 2, 6; 1 Cor. i. 28, ii. 6, vi. 13, xiii. as above, ver. 2, 26; 2 Cor. iii. 7, 11, 13, 14; Gal. iii. 17, v. 4. 11; Eph. ii. 15; 2 Thess. ii. 8; 2 Tim. i. 10; to make meaningless, powerless, or at least inoperative and valueless, in regard to some special purpose; so that it need no longer be taken into any account. **Faileth.**—Cf. Rom. ix. 6. Also cf. how Peter and James contrast the "falling" of the flower and the grass, with the "abiding word" of God. Love has the permanence of the "kingdom which cannot be shaken" (Heb. xii. 28).

Ver. 9. **In part.**—Lit. "*from* a part." Evans graphically says: "As we know the moon, deriving our knowledge of her from the one, only, side we ever see." [May we add, seeing slightly round the edge of the known part, owing to the "libration"?]

Ver. 10.—Stanley notes: Not when we come to it, but when it comes to us.

Ver. 11.—"Perfect" with Paul, *e.g.* ii. 6, iii. 1, commonly suggests the manhood of the Christian life, as opposed to its childhood. Hence the transition to the similar contrast of "manhood" and "childhood" here.

Ver. 12.—"*In* a (metal) mirror," more accurate. Yet we seem to see the images *through* the mirror. Also, "in an enigma," for "darkly"; yet we must suppose that we have *some* clue, and can half solve it, or we should have no knowledge at all, not even "in part." "Face to face" and "in an enigma" are borrowed from LXX. of Num. xii. 8. Also "know *fully*"; such generally is the force of noun and verb with Paul. (See how, *e.g.*, 2 Cor. vi. 9; Col. i. 6; 1 Tim. iv. 3; Eph. iv. 13; Col. ii. 2, gain in force.)

Ver. 13. **Abideth.**—Singular. Each passes as it were in review. What shall be the verdict? Faith? "It abideth." Hope? "It abideth." Love? "It abideth! Yes, and is greatest!" See this same triad in Col. i. 4 *sq.*; 1 Thess. i. 13, v. 8; Tit. ii. 2, etc. The "*theological virtues*," as distinguished from the "*philosophical*" or "*cardinal*," wisdom, justice, valour, prudence.

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Whole Chapter.*

**The whole chapter** breaks up into *three paragraphs*, grouping themselves around three central words:—

I. **All-important**, and **Indispensable** (vers. 1-3).
II. **All-enduring**, and **Invincible** (vers. 4-7).
III. **All-outlasting**, and **Immortal** (vers. 8-13).

So, then, we have **A Sermon to the Church at Corinth**, and to all other Churches whom it may concern. How truly Paul might have said, "I speak this to move you to shame." He has shown them themselves, in their factions, their jealousies, their vanity, their "carnality" in its many-sided manifestations. And he has a good deal more to say yet. But, as if for relief to himself, he turns aside from the direct counsels and rebukes of the letter to look at and to show to them an ideal Christian life, which is pretty much everything that theirs is not. He is like Bunyan's Interpreter, taking these Christians into "a little room" where sat "the two children, Passion and Patience, and Passion seemed to be much discontent, but Patience was very quiet." "Passion" indeed, in their very gathering at the Lord's Table; but what an atmosphere of peace here. "Corinthians, I have shown you yourselves. Look on that picture,—and on this! Do you not love **Love**? Will you not conform yourselves to this?" He is working on Divine lines, with Divine wisdom. Thus does the Paraclete convict (John xvi. 8) the world of Sin; by exhibiting Christ in the sharp and condemning contrast of His righteousness, that they may sit in judgment upon themselves and be saved.

I. **You boast of your "tongues."**—In your Church gatherings here one, there another, starts up, all over the assembly, and utters his ecstatic, unintelligible words. Those less fortunate, as they think themselves, who have neither the tongue gift, nor the humbler but very useful gift of the interpreter, covet the showy, startling endowment. Well, give any one of you the *Charism* in its largest range and measure; add whatever vehicle of language, in any land, or race, or age, man's thought may use for its expression; add, if you will—if God will—the speech of angels, and of beings belonging to orders unknown and unnamed by man; and then let him talk away! If there be no love in his life, none in his heart, he will have no real, no worthy, message! Clang! clang! goes the cymbal; loud, empty, meaningless. What is it worth? Let some plain man get up instead, and speak, as it were some simple, sweet strain of love's coherent music, full of help and comfort for his tempted neighbour. That poor devil-driven Saul sitting next you wants David's harping, not your brazen clanging. But is there no help in the next man there? He is "a prophet." Pentecost has come; the very "servants and handmaidens" now share the gift of the grand men of the Old Covenant days. The written Word is not yet completed,

to be God's abiding Message and Messenger to men. We want the prophet as yet. Yes, there is help in him; he has from time to time a message from God for the congregation. (But so had Balaam, and so had Caiaphas, a message from God on their lips!) He has even been taken into long-hidden secrets of the counsels of God, and he comes forth a man to whom they are "mysteries" no longer. He is initiated; he has esoteric knowledge; and he is authorised to make them now the common property of you all. Indeed, "the deep things of God" are not wholly unsounded by the man of "knowledge." Yes, there is help in him; but is there Love in him? No? Then he has much, and can give you much, but he *is*—nothing. A mere conduit-pipe, a mere vessel, to be thrown aside, when by him God has brought you blessing, and with no real part in it all whilst he conveys it. But try this other man. Subtler of intellect than any Rabbi of the schools of my youth, he can outdo them in "removing mountains." Let him lead the company of scholars, and the mountain difficulties vanish and fall; there is a plain highway for the simplest learner who follows in his footsteps. And has, then, this man of acute intellect Love? He could even with strong faith, if need were, bow Nature to him, and make the very mountains to be moved, almost as if their Maker bade them be uprooted. (Let the thought be pardoned!) Yes? But has he Love? Is there Love for God and man behind all this miracle-working might? No? Then the Master will say, "Miracle-worker, but worker of iniquity, I never knew you! Depart!" It profiteth him nothing! The preacher himself, the office-bearer, the richly endowed worker, needs to beware. There are the gifts, these or those, more or fewer; but is there the Life, whose Spring of strength, whose Law, whose formative, governing Principle is, Love? If not, Paul's verdict, God's verdict, is—"nothing"! Love is **all-important and indispensable.**

II. **But now what manner of men and women are the rank and file of the membership?**—Fifteen marks are here of the Life which is Christian life indeed! Parade the members; bring them up to these official standards of requirement. This first cannot long bear to be unfairly rated and dealt with. He is soon on fire at a slight put upon him. He will not long be kept out of his rights. And as to those who thus give him less than his due, you will not find him putting himself out of the way to do them the least service; indeed, he has hardly time to be kind to anybody, even when the kindness is readily *in* his way, so eagerly busy is he speedily to right himself. This next has no good word, no kind thought, no thankful thought, for his neighbour who is doing better than himself in the world, and whose gifts are making his mark for him in the Church. He is eaten up with envy. The object of his envy is also in danger. See him come into the assembly of the Church, for business or for worship. It is almost with a swagger. You can almost see the insignia of his every office blazing upon his puffed-up bosom and enwreathed about his uplifted neck. He is highly gifted and able, *and he knows it.* He is inflated with the knowledge! Hear him speak, watch him at the business of the Church; it is a perpetual offence against all Christlike seemliness of word and spirit and behaviour. "Seeketh his own;" offices might be made for him; he accumulates them all, and himself is the centre to which all must converge. Try another. Those are not his faults; but take care how you vex him: he is "touchy," and readily suspects an evil motive. Moreover, his memory keeps most accurate account of all wrong done to him. If an adversary of his makes a slip likely to damage fatally his case or his reputation, how he chuckles and "rejoices in the iniquity"! You hardly stir him to such joy when, perhaps at the price of no small struggle, Truth of principle, or character, or life, is gloriously exhibited. Try yet one more. He—or is it she?—bears everything with long patience and multiplied forgiveness; insists, as long as possible, on believing the best conceivable construction to be the true one, even

though getting laughed at as "simple" for her pains; when her Belief is staggered by what seem stubborn facts, and can hardly persist longer in its "loving" estimate and judgment, then Hope steps in, and pleads that perhaps even yet things may be found to be different, or, if not, that perhaps the offender may some day repent; and if, driven out at last from even the refuge of her Hope, she can no longer help but know the simple, bad truth, then her Love will bear, and bear on, and bear up and onward with the brave endurance of the Patience of Love! Those others, the standard condemns them. This one will alone pass muster. And happily, these last are the staple of which Church life is woven. However it may have been in Corinth, the gifted ones and the great are not many in the Churches. There are always more of these plainer stones and common bricks in the building, than of the sculptured headstones and pillars and of the costly marbles. Happy the Church "enriched" with these long-suffering, kind, non-obtrusive, humble ones; of fair and seemly behaviour in every detail of speech and conduct; unselfish, hard to kindle with wrath, slow to remember wrong, and loth to suspect it; whose joy is the discovery and the triumph of the Right; incredulous of evil intent in anything, doggedly hopeful, even against "facts"; strongly patient of the inevitable worst. A Church composed of only such would conquer the world. Such Love is conquering all, even when it seems only to be **enduring all.** "The meek shall inherit the earth." Such Love wins; **it is invincible!**

III. **But now as to these "gifts," God's gifts.**—Is there not something better? Has He no greater thing than these to give? You look around you, and see His distribution of temporal good. Evidently He does not appraise it very highly, or He would not give it so freely to men who do not love Him, or thank Him, or glorify Him in the use of it. Certainly, if it counted for as much with Him as it does with the men of the world, His children would never be left without it. He not only "*knows how* to give," but *gives*, "good things to His children." Look within your Church, and see how He gives these Charisms, to you factious, envious, impure Corinthians, rather than (say) to my dear, loving, blameless Philippian friends; to you, indeed, beyond any other Church. They are His endowments; not to be despised; each in its order and sphere and measure to be used for His work and glory. But beyond such gifts He values Character. It is the one eternally abiding enrichment of your life. You boast of your wide and deep "knowledge"; but it is accompanied by a wider and deeper ignorance. What is right is only outline, and very much will need revising or unlearning when the Perfect has come. Not a little of it will have lost all meaning and value in the new world of eternity; it was so entirely knowledge of, and adjusted to, this world of temporary things. You see only one aspect of any fact at once; from this partial view you gain only partial knowledge, *relatively* true. (Do not be dogmatic, and intolerant of the man who gets his own partial view exactly as you do yours. Let love remind you of that!) See all around things, as you will some day, and the knowledge of to-day will seem the mere A B C of the schooldays of God's little children; your most confident judgments will seem the half-knowledge and often erroneous opinions of the boy. In the manhood of that life you shall "know," as even now God "knows" you, *and appraises you accordingly.* You have deep insight into things? Why, you never get face to face with things themselves. You see, not realities, but their dim reflections in a mirror; and what you see is a very enigma, baffling you as you try to "know" it. You may call it "knowing" when in that world you learn without error, effort, hindrance. The "tongues" will hardly outlast your own age. "Prophecy" will more and more rapidly pass out of use as the Great Prophet begins more frequently and clearly and sufficiently to speak to His Church by His Word and His Spirit. Yourselves change and pass; and those things

change and pass with you. Get hold of the one abiding wealth, Character, whose foundation is Love. Love is eternal as God Himself. Character will go forward when your unchanging Self goes forward, with a continuity of existence unbroken even in Death. Seek to have it God's own "Character," Love. The Life of Love finds its sphere as simply and naturally there as here. Love is the one grace which needs no modification to adjust it to the new conditions of life and employment in that world. Faith, "abiding" till then, will have perished in the moment of its consummation, dying as it sees what it believed for. Hope —*our* Christian hope, "abiding" till then—will have merged in enjoyment. Love "abides," *even then*, **All-outlasting and Immortal.**

## *SEPARATE HOMILIES.*

[Strictly belongs to xii. 31, "*A more excellent way.*"]

*Love's "Way" of Life.*—[*I.e.* "Life" as βίος, not as ζωή, the life *which* is lived, not *by which* man lives; the life that makes the matter of a *biography*, not that which animates the creatures of *zoology*.]

**Introduction.**—*Observe the sobriety of Paul's judgment.* In reaction from the excesses, the irregularities, the vauntings of the men gifted with "tongues," some would have gone to an extreme in the other direction, and would have suppressed their exercise altogether, or, if that were impossible, would have discredited and decried them (as perhaps, 1 Thess. v. 19). Paul, "speaking with tongues more than they all," could hardly do this; yet his estimate of the "tongues" might well have been affected, adversely, by their abuse at Corinth, or, too favourably, by the fact of his own sense of the value of gifts. Some can praise no gift but their own, can value nothing but it, can do nothing but overpraise it; or can keep no clear vision and calm balance of judgment when a good thing is abused. Paul: "Covet earnestly the best gifts," viz. knowledge, prophecy, tongues. "They *are* all good; prefer prophecy to tongues; but there is something better yet—Love." And this love is not so much a gift or a point of character; it is a "*way*," a *path*, in which all gifts are to be sought and employed.

It is **I. A life; II. A rule of life.** [*I.e.* like the Jewish *Halachah*, it is "the Way," and "the Rule" which marks out "the way." Love is the one all-embracing Christian *Halachah*, a Christian preceptive Talmud condensed into a word.] In both senses a novelty.

**I. A life.**—1. Striking that *not wisdom, nor intellect, nor strength of character*, is made the *starting-point* of the Gospel conception *of life*. No; but the one universally possible characteristic. The child, therefore, and the humble poor, the simple and unlettered, the scarce-recovered heathen, can live it. It is a "*way*" smooth for the feeblest foot, and level to the entrance and use of the lowliest. How few could hope to live the life of the philosopher or the ruler. All may live the life whose characteristic is love. The very conception of any other life must be to most a hidden secret. The conception of this style of life stands open to the thought and heart of all. All other ideals which teachers have sketched out and held up are for the few; this is for the many—for all. 2. [Cf. the description of the high-souled man in Aristotle, *Ethics*, vi. 3 (as quoted in Luthardt, *Moral Truths*, p. 292). "It is also characteristic of him that he does not rush to places and opportunities which are highly esteemed, and *where others have already played the first part*; that he is in general but slowly roused except where a great honour or a great work is concerned," etc. "He is *candid, because* he *looks upon men with contempt*; hence he is always *inclined* to speak the truth,

except in cases when he ironically reserves his real opinion, a part which he may well play with respect to the multitude." "Nothing can easily astonish him, because nothing is great in his eyes." "Even in externals it is generally admitted that the gait of the high-souled man is slow, his voice deep and emphatic, his words few. For a man to whom few things are important is not inclined to haste, and he who regards nothing as great does not exert his voice." All of which, when brought into the light of the New Testament, and judged in the presence of ideal human life as seen in The Man Christ Jesus, is simply **Pride.** As Luthardt adds: "So too the wise man, the Stoic ideal, is the representative of indifference towards men, and his morality is nothing more than cold resignation."] 3. *This* is *an ideal* of life, moreover, which *can be true for both man and God.* Divine love translating itself into human expression, and exhibiting itself within the limits of human conditions, is seen in the God-Man, Who is in this, as in all else, the Mediator between, the Unifier of, God and man. 4. What a perplexity to reason that *such a lovely ideal* should *have to suffer*, to "*endure*"! 5. Moreover, it will not be content to exist as a mere passive virtue. It is very characteristic of Christianity throughout, that the strain of vers. 4-7 should seem to be one of endurance and self-contained goodness and peace. The points of character lie within the circle of the man's own personal life, and that rather as he is acted upon by, than as he is an actor in, or himself affecting, other lives. Yet, as matter of experiment, it is clearly certain that neither in man nor God can a life whose germinant principle is Love, be merely passive, or patient; it will be active, going out all around in search of objects on which it may spend its force. The love of God has sought man out; it has always made the first approaches in view of reconciliation and fellowship. Though God's love is not (in Butler's words) "a bare and singular disposition to bestow happiness," this is its inevitably prevalent characteristic. And in man, where it is, it acts. It is as busy as it is patient. It discovers reasons for doing good, and develops a wonderful ingenuity in discovering methods of accomplishing good. Love gives wonderful wisdom, and there is no other spring of *persevering* activity which will not at times, or altogether, find its force outmatched or outwearied and exhausted. "*Love never faileth.*"

II. **A rule of life.**—1. All external directions and legislation must needs fail somewhere. Many cases will "crop up" which have not been, *in so many words*, provided against. Many rules will cease to be needed, or to be applicable. New rules are needed, often upon the instant, when there is no time for reference to authority, or indeed for any lengthy deliberation of the judgment. The one perfect legislator is a fully enlightened Love. No case can arise, so unexpectedly or so completely without precedent, but that a healthy heart, filled with that love which is the grace of the Spirit, will be equal to giving direction. Love will keep the moral sense active, the "touch" sensitive. It will need training, enlightening, informing, but it has in it an instinctive, native, legislative faculty. "What does God command? What does the Bible say?" "There is no express decision at all." "What is customary?" "There has been no precedent within my knowledge." "What does So-and-so advise?" "There is no time to consult him." "What does Love say? What would Incarnate Love have done? What would God's love do?" A "law" for the occasion, which will not be far from the mark, will not be hard by that test to discover. 2. The niceties of justice, of courtesy, of kindness, between man and man can only be regulated by some such *inner guiding* "Law." The finer points of personal bearing towards others, such as are expanded by Paul in vers. 4-7, need inculcating upon the child. For self-assertion is

natural to man, however much society "manners"—which are, in this particular, cut-flowers that once grew upon the root of Christian love—may repress or refine its manifestations (see Fragments from Robertson). [No more perfect "gentleman" than Cicero; but the natural heart shows in such a sentence from a letter to his intimate friend Atticus (i. 14, as given in Farrar), "Heavens! how I showed off" (cognate word to Paul's "*vaunteth*") "before my new auditor, Pompeius!"] But the only absolutely effectual education or repression will be that of the instinct of Love acting from within. "As the man thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. xxiii. 7); most simply and truly, in that the real man is in the purposes of the heart, whether they come to the surface in expression or not; but also in the equally true sense that what the man is within that he will, in many points, certainly when "off his guard," appear. "The man maketh the manners" (Evans, in *Speaker*), when the very germ and the summary also of the character is Love. 3. This is an atmosphere, an aroma, hanging about, given off by, a Christian life in every detail. It will control the desire for "gifts"; only those will be cared about which Love can use. It will control their exercise; they will only be employed for the purposes, and within the limits, which Love will allow. It is an inward "ointment which bewrayeth itself" [Prov. xxvii. 16, borrowing the illustration, though not the thought]. As the thought of a man is found by the "thought-reader" to betray itself in unconscious muscular action; so will the thought whose summing up is, most comprehensively, "Love," betray itself in action, even when not directly intended by the man, or not distinctly adverted to by him. It makes, and marks, the "good man," as distinguished from the "righteous man," of Rom. v. 7. 4. Give rules enough, and you may secure any required number of right acts; but you must get a right heart if you desire righteousness. Put love in, and you may get by outgrowth from within a Christlike life.

Vers. 1-3. *Without Love—Nothing!*

I. **Applicable to the Church.**—*This goes back to an earlier thought in this letter to Corinth* (chap. i.). Over against the great, swelling, proud entities of the world, Paul there sets the non-entities of the Gospel. God had already set them in array over against each other. Forces intellectual, social, political, the inclinations of the natural heart, its judgments, its desires, its passions, were all against the early Church. But it "*brought to nought things that are.*" The "power and the wisdom" of God in Christ brought to nought "the power and the wisdom" of the princes of this "world." The thing that was "despised," and was "set at nought" in the valuation of the world [as the Stone Himself had been "set at nought"], "overcame the world." The nothings conquered the somethings. And what was true of the Church was true of the individual Christian. The woman, the child, the slave, often won the master, the house. The Decian persecution seemed to bring the hopes and prospects and numbers and strength of the Church to their lowest. But many a sufferer in the Decian troubles lived to see, after no long interval, a Christian emperor upon the Imperial throne. It is true simply to say that God "saw to it" that His work triumphed. The power of God was in the victory. But His power works by means, and uses instrumentalities; it accomplishes its purposes through and by means of the conditions and elements of ordinary human nature and life. Regarding the matter from this point, one might, must, say that the secret of the victory was "*Love.*" "Charity" conquered. Force might have crushed force. ["They that take the sword," in defending or extending the kingdom of Christ, "shall perish by the sword."] But force broke itself upon Love. The waves found Love an immovable rock against

which their power was dissipated in vain spray. The "meek inherited the earth" ("wielded the world," as the Wycliffe gospel has it) because of their "meekness." The reed-sceptre ruled, where the rod of iron could only have coerced. Love was the secret of resistance and of conquest. The meekness, the patience, the forgiveness of injuries, the kindness which laid itself out to compass the good of their very persecutors, [protesting (*e.g.* in Tertullian, *Apol.*, c. 39) that it was loyal to the government and prayed for the emperor],—these were all aspects of Love, the love which was as new a thing to the world, in language and thought, as it was in life and facts. **Without this**, for the conquest of the world, **the Church had been "nothing."** A lesson for all time. It is "a universal law" of the extension of the kingdom of Christ. If all the Church had been "enriched" with gifts as the Corinthians were (i. 4-7); if literally all the Church had spoken with "*tongues*"; if Moses' wish had been literally realised, "and all the Lord's people had been *prophets*" (Num. xi. 29), and had had "knowledge" to which no thought of God in His purposes toward man was any longer "*a mystery*"; if miracle-working faith, instead of being confined to narrow limits of place and age, had been the every-day, mountain-moving, mighty power, always at the command of the Church; if every Christian had been as wealthy as a Barnabas, and as liberal, so that the charities of the Church, not only towards its own "*poor*," but towards the poor outside its membership, had been a hundredfold greater than they have ever by any possibility been; if a whole Church had stood before the world "ready to be offered," or actually offered, to death, and that *by fire*,—yet the world would not have been conquered. By such means it never will be. These things have their meaning and their use; they have been factors in the great result, which meant the empire won, and a Christianity associated with the permanently progressive, intelligent, world-affecting, race-leading civilisation of the centuries, ever since the victory over the empire. The miraculous gifts, for example, were, like the bell tolled to announce that the worship is going to begin, arresting attention, awaking interest, inviting to participation, but ceasing after their brief, initial work was done. Not without these things, perhaps; the martyrdoms were an exceedingly impressive argument to every heathen spectator. But even given these things, *not without Love.* Gifts; eloquence in the literature or the press of the Church; deep and broad philosophy in the exponents and defenders of Christianity; the almost miraculous power of enthusiasm and of strong faith in the doctrines, the fortunes, the future, of Christianity, or of a special creed or Church; charities; martyrdoms of ascetic, or laborious, spending of life,—these alone are but the body; Love is the soul. These may be the instruments; Love wields them, and the victory is hers. All these have been divorced from Love many a time. The learning and acuteness of apologetics and polemics and didactics have undergone a transfiguration as fearful as when a demon entered into and looked out from the eyes, and uttered himself through the lips, of perhaps some tender father or affectionate son; love has been cast out by a stronger spirit, of evil. Almsgiving has become bribery to buy adherents to a sect, or a method of earning merit for one's own salvation, or even of winning applause of men. At one period there was almost an epidemic of madness for volunteered martyrdom, which did not wait for the informer, but thrust itself upon the notice of the heathen magistrates, men and women claiming to be noticed as Christians; the motive being, in fact, not Love's witness, unto death, for the Master, but the same winning of merit. The asceticisms of nearly every section of the Church have been martyrdoms whose whole character is altered, whose value is gone, because they have

become voluntary sufferings, inflicted as the purchase-price of merit; self-love, not love, thus being, with more or less subtilty, their motive. To God these are **nothing**. As giving to the Church any real hold of, or victory over, the world, though they may seem to achieve a temporary and limited admiration and success, if these be her armour or her weapons, **the Church is nothing**. God cannot work through a loveless Church.

II. **Applied to the Christian man.**—*If the individual Christian have not, or lose, this characteristic and essential mark of life, he too has reverted to his old and true and native valuation before God.* He is one of the "things *that are not*" (i. 28),—"**nothing!**" "*Of Him* **are** *ye.*" All standing and life are of God and His grace. "Christ is made unto him" all that he is or has (i. 29). "If he have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. viii. 9). And the "fruit of the Spirit" is "love." "By this do all men know that he is a disciple, that he has love" (John xiii. 35). The charity of this chapter is the "love" of the Second Table (so-called) of the Law. But it has arisen out of "the love of God"—His to us—first "shed abroad in our heart" (Rom. v. 5); with so close a connection that if the love of the brotherhood be wanting, it argues the absence of the love of the Father, and this, that the Father's forgiving, adopting love (Rom. viii. 15, 16) has never been known, or has been forfeited. *Status*, life, love—all with Paul are linked in vitally close association. A man may therefore test himself by this paragraph. "What must I do to be saved?" is one earlier form of the question. But afterwards, and frequently, "What must I be to reckon myself a Christian?" He may cast Paul's inventory into analogous, modern forms, and say, "What have I?"

1. "*Profession?*"—It is something that a man can speak the "tongue" of God's modern Israel—"the language of Canaan" (Isa. xix. 18). The dialect does not come naturally to, or sit with facility upon, the lips of a foreigner. It is the man who has "entered into the kingdom of God" by being "new-born" into it (John iii. 3, 5), and who has spoken it from his "new-birth" onward, who talks it "like a native." He can detect the accent of a stranger who has merely "picked it up." Yet the native citizen may lose his citizen heart without losing the old trick of speech. The prodigal among the swine will speak there with the gentleman's accent he learnt at home from the father. "If a man say," etc. (1 John iv. 20). He may "say," but lip evidence is not enough even for himself. Is that all? "**Nothing!**"

2. "*Intellect?*"—There may be, happily, the closest alliance between intellect, naturally of the highest and most highly trained, and Christian revelation. Its believers and defenders and exponents have by no means been fools or unversed in learning. Augustine, Pascal, Butler, would have been intellectual giants, whatever their creed or their theme. Yet whilst great gifts have been consecrated in all their abundance to the service of Christ, again and again have the great thinkers been also simple believers. Indeed, they may "play the man" in the fight for Truth; but they must, each of them, be "the little child" in order to be Christians in any real, personally beneficial, saving sense. Intellectual appreciation of Christianity; hearty approval of its ethics and laws; and mastery both of its difficulties and its supports; intense vehemence in its defence against opponents,—all these may be divorced from the distinctive love for Christ or for redeemed man. "**Nothing!**" The noblest intellect is a noble gift to offer upon the altar of consecration. It finds no small acceptance with God. But if only the intellect has grasped Christianity, the man is not yet a Christian. Indeed, he only as yet knows the externals of Christianity, as he might know and defend Buddhism or Mahometanism. The loving heart of the pardoned, regenerate sinner

alone knows Christianity. The intellect may give allegiance to the system of Truth; the loving heart alone gives union with Christ. That makes the Christian. Without it, the adherent of one amongst many creeds of the world,—"**Nothing!**"

3. "*Enthusiasm?*"—A great power, which, when joined with the grip upon, and the allegiance of the intellect to, the Truth, makes a man a mighty worker. It may give "driving" power to the organiser and the ruler in the Church's offices; it will to himself be a "staying" power. He may rouse others with his gift, a born leader of men. He may "pull things through" to a victory snatched out of the very jaws of defeat, when all but himself were despondent, or ready to yield. With enthusiasm and natural energy a man may "work" a Church as he would "work" a business, or some secular society, and may do it very successfully. But there come moments of self-revelation to men, when, under the searching light of the teaching Spirit, they discover that a passionate devotion to a particular Church, or to some special department of Christian work, with an enthusiasm and success which have made them bulk in the public eye as forefront "Christians" in labour and fruit, has been unaccompanied with the deep devotion of Christ Himself, without which men may "push" the business or the agencies of the Church as successfully, and in as secular a spirit, as they do their own business, or may be as devoted to the fortunes and interests of their Church or sect as they are, —and with precisely the same kind of devotion,—to their political party. "**Nothing!**"

4. "*Good works and charities?*"—[God's estimate of "good works," let it be remembered, is *qualitative*, not *quantitative*. Further:] These may have many meanings besides love. [There was more than a child's fun in the definition, "'Charity' is giving poor folks old stuff you can't use yourself."] (1) Mere *weakness* which cannot say, "No"; (2) A *self-indulgence* which gives, to get as quickly as may be out of sight and mind the unpleasantly painful object of "charity"; (3) An attempt to quiet conscience; (4) An indolence which cannot bear the trouble of inquiring into the truth of the applicant's case, and still less of undertaking the often extremely difficult task of discovering how really to help the case; (5) A mere compliance with surrounding example or custom, from fear of singularity; (6) Self-glory. Indeed, no "religious" action needs watching by the actor more closely than does charity; none more readily misleads the man himself; nothing more readily than almsgiving can be accomplished without "love." The motive which prompts almsgiving may indeed be a very real and genuine benevolence of heart. But if it be benevolence which has no eye set upon Christ, nor draws inspiration from His love shed abroad within, it is not yet enough. "Dole" away! "Dole" until you are yourself a beggar! Is that all? "**Nothing!**"

5. "*Devotion to self, self-denial, of the most rigorous, even to death?*"—But whilst "death" may mean strength of principle, and of faith, it has meant, and may mean, stubbornness and obstinacy which would not go back or yield when once a position had been taken up and the man was publicly pledged to it; *i.e.* Pride. Labours or austerities that ruin health, or even end in death, may be the merest *caput mortuum* of a religious life, from which all that once gave them such imperfect meaning and value as they had, has evaporated. They may become the merest mechanics of a religious profession, from which all soul and love have departed. All these? Yet perhaps "**Nothing!**"

6. Happy, then, if by the gift and grace of the Holy Spirit—whether with or without some, or all, of these—the man's self-examination says, "Yet I do love!" (cf. John xxi. 17).

Ver. 2. *Man-worth.*

I. The greatest thing in the universe is **Mind. The greatest thing in Mind is Love.**—Whatever a human intelligence may be, have, or do, if destitute of love, it is nothing. 1. Not the *gregarious sentiment* which links us to our fellow-creatures. That is an instinct common to animal existence; in some men stronger than others, making those who possess it in the highest degree "amiable, good-natured." Much domestic love and social benevolence is nothing but a development of this. It is a blessing, but not a virtue. There is no morality in it. It can feed the upas tree as well as nourish a tree of life. 2. Not *theological love* for one's own faith and sect, which pours forth tender and pathetic benedictions upon all within the limits of one's own creed, but fulminates anathemas upon all besides. This is not love; it is a demon working under the mask of the angel "Love." 3. Nor *sacerdotal love*, "which speaks eloquently about the cure of souls and Church extension, but little about the physical and social woes of the race." Priestly selfishness, not manly love. 4. We may describe, we cannot define, it as a generous moral sympathy for the race springing from love to the Creator. All real philanthropy will have its source in piety. Such love is no spasmodic emotion; it is an all-pervading element, the underground of character, the heart of the heart, the soul of the soul. It places man's entire being in a right relation to God and the universe. It was incarnate in Jesus. *This love alone can confer real worth on humanity.* "What is he worth?" means not, "How much native force, spiritual attainment, or divine soul has he?" but, "How much money?" Gold outweighs soul in the social balance. Fill your purse, and though your soul be empty, you are great. "Wealth is the one thing needful; Mammon is God; love of the world is inspiration,"—such is the Gospel of the age!

II. **Without this love, man is nothing spiritually—**

1. *In relation to Nature.*—Whatever does not minister to the spiritual in man does not minister to *himself.* Nature gives *sensuous* pleasures, measured in variety and extent by the senses. To a sensuous man "the world is a larder to feed him, a wardrobe to clothe him, a market to enrich him; or, at most, a riddle to amuse his intellect." She gives *intellectual* pleasures, but thinking is necessary to their participation; they flow from nature only when it is turned into a science; the fountains of mental pleasure are concealed until by the Moses-rod of philosophic thought the outward crust of the flinty rock is broken through. But the *spiritual* pleasures she gives are the highest. Nature is then looked at through the heart, the self. "It is not merely a table for the animal, or a problem for the thinker; but a loving home for the child, a temple for the adoring saint. To impart these highest joys of nature is Nature's highest function." Love entering into the heart of a sensuous, selfish, or merely intellectual man, touches all nature into a new form, burns up his old world, causes its elements to melt with fervent heat, its heavens to pass away, till he rapturously exclaims, "A new heavens and a new earth! The former things are passed away!" To the sensual, nature is gratification; to the thinker, it is theory; to the loving, it is heaven! Without love "I am nothing" in relation to the spiritual enjoyments of nature.

2. *In relation to Providence.*—Providence is only absolutely good when it is realised that its grand design is moral goodness; "not to make a Dives in time, but a Lazarus in eternity." If Providence only raises a man to fortune, enriches him with knowledge, or lifts him to fame, and does not refine and purify his sympathies, expand and elevate his soul, it has been a bane rather than a boon. Material blessings to a bad, unloving heart are spiritual curses. The ten thousand influences of Providence—its sun, its

rains, its gracious breezes—make the healthy germ rooted in the soil of love rise every day into new forms of beauty and life; but the tree with no such rooting is by them all only stripped of its remaining verdure, and hastened to its dissolution and decay. As the mortally diseased may say, "I am nothing to the health-giving economy of nature," so the unloving may say, "I am nothing in relation to the spiritual blessings of Providence." Rom. v. 3 *sqq.* links the series Tribulation, Patience, Experience, Hope, Confidence that fears no Shame, "**because** the love of God," etc. "All things work together for good *to them that love God.*" The very God of Providence can make them so work together for none others.

3. *In relation to Christianity.*—Love alone can interpret love; none but the loving can rise to the meaning of such a revelation of love as Christianity. Power in philosophic analysis, accuracy in dialectics, skill in criticism, will be incapable of understanding its essence and genius. They may understand Theology, but not Christianity. The one is for the intellect, the other for the heart; and only the heart of love can reach it. It is a real unction from the Holy One, [a charism of the Spirit] by which, alone, we know all things in Christianity. Still more, that which renders us incapable of entering into its meaning, unfits also for applying its "exceeding great and precious promises." They are for the children of love, and for them only. Its sublime disclosures and its quickening spirit, its promises of mercy and its radiant glories,—without love to them "I am nothing."

4. *In relation to the community of the good.*—The "city," the "church," the "family," wherever they exist, have the same bond of union, the same condition of friendship, the same justifying principle, the same standard of work. Not wealth, learning, talent, birth. In corrupt "society" especially does the first make a man a respectable member of it, however callous or evil his heart. But in the great community of the good, love is everything. Whatever else a man may have, if he have not this, he is not admitted into their circle, he is excluded from their fellowship. To this glorious community, without love "I am nothing."—*Adapted from* "*Homilist*," New Series, i. 433.

Ver. 5. "*Thinketh no evil.*"—"Does not reckon, or reckon with, evil, does not take evil into the account." Such is the full meaning of the word, which is thus a very far wider grace than merely an absence of suspiciousness of spirit and judgment. "Suspects no evil" is included; but there is much more. It suspects none, and imputes none; it entertains no thought of resentment, and devises no evil.

**I. Attributes no evil to others, nor thinks of such a thing.**

**II. Contrives no evil against others, nor thinks of such a thing.**

I. 1. There are problems in life, of exceeding complexity, questions for our judgment and foresight, which must be solved. Not the smallest element in the complexity is introduced in the very fact that the character and conduct of men and women are involved; and character and conduct are problems in themselves, problems within the problem, often of yet greater complexity. We do not understand ourselves, of whom we know the elements of the problem more fully than we can ever hope to do in the case of any one else. Yet who has not found the disentangling of motive, for example, of worthy from unworthy, of blamable from laudable, and the resulting judgment upon the moral quality of his own conduct, a thing past his own wisdom and skill? Who has not, therefore, had to cast himself wholly upon the mercy of the one judgment that is built upon all the facts, and those read with Absolute Wisdom and Absolute Justice? Not yet do we know even ourselves "as we are known." And how much less others? 2. Yet we must form an estimate. The Master

said, "Judge not," yet directly after bade His disciples "cast not pearls before swine." They must, then, be able to judge who are the swinish men. Officially, at any rate, men must often "judge" others, and must speak out at all cost their judgment, whoever may be condemned or ruined. No man with a moral sense awake can help forming, swiftly and instinctively, a judgment, favourable or unfavourable, upon a thousand things he sees in the character and conduct of men around him, or even upon what he hears—suspending, in this case, his judgment upon the *man*, until he learns whether the facts be as reported. 3. There is a blind, foolish confidence which will not hear, or see, or be told; a simplicity which is the sport and the prey of every rogue; a simplicity which "passes on and is punished." Carried to that extent, it is folly, not honour; childishness, not childlikeness. But it is an error in an honourable direction. There is no type of man less noble or exalted than the man of preternatural shrewdness, whose boast it is that he can always see through the millstone, that he is never deceived, and that nobody ever can blind him, who "numbers, weighs, and measures" everybody in scales of unfailing accuracy, and who has no misgivings about his skill or his method, even though somehow those weighed by him are always "found," at least a little, "wanting." That is a hateful type of man whose cardinal maxims are that he "never trusts any man any further than he can see him," and "never believes a man honest until he cannot any longer believe him a rogue." In solving the problem of men, their characters and conduct, his rough-and-ready method always is to "*think evil*" first; he will always first assume that "*evil*" is one of the elements of the problem; he "*reckons with*" that. 4. One would have thought that experience would abate the self-confidence of such a habit of judgment. How often has fuller, later knowledge of the persons and the facts shown that all the harsh judgments were unfounded and unfair; that, indeed, all our thinking and talking has been waste of time and words, all our virtuous indignation was quite gratuitous, and our disturbed feelings were nothing but needless distress! We had been pronouncing a judgment where we had not all the facts. No doubt bitter experience will show the most guileless and unsuspecting that all men are not worthy of trust; but some are thus worthy in the highest degree, some are so in an unexpected degree, and the average of even the world is high. "Be wise as serpents, harmless as doves." 5. In even the graver matters of moral conduct there is room for the moderating hand of experience to restrain hasty judgment. We have seen a man sin—there was no room for question; have heard him speak unadvisedly. But fuller knowledge of his education and training, consideration of the subtle influences of inherited physical conditions, have not indeed destroyed his responsibility, but have lightened his blameworthiness a little, and have modified what must needs be our condemnation. Only One Eye can take in—where there has been manifestly a poor performance of duty, or a very clear failure—all the struggle that went on before, and the repentance that came after; all the fight in which the poor fallen fellow for a long time held his own, and conquered, until the one fatal moment when he failed and fell. When the wrong, supposed or real, impinges upon oneself, it is doubly hard to be fair. Yet experience ought to contribute to teach a Christian man to "think no evil," or at least as the first stage to "believe all things" to be the best, and to hope for some extenuation and abatements, when there is no longer room for simple acquittal of all blame. Yet not experience, nothing but a Love, which is not an easy-going temperament, too indolent to be severe or to be angry, but a *grace*, will cast out the habit of "taking evil into account." To Love, the first presumption will be

in favour of something better than appears. It will not readily believe evil of any, nor, except with much reluctance, review a favourable estimate long ago formed. When Love is judge, it will always be on the prisoner's side. An evil solution is the last thing it will look for in the problem. It will take precaution, but not entertain suspicion. It will first put the best construction upon what is confessedly staggering to confidence, or difficult to understand. It will begin by believing the best it can about any man; it will first credit him with all the best intentions which can reasonably be supposed,—believes whilst it can; hopes when it hardly can hope; endures when it really cannot believe the best. The shrewd man "*rejoices in iniquity*"; chuckles that his harsh judgment was verified and his acuteness vindicated. The man of love "*rejoices in the truth*"; and that, even when the "*truth*" of the man suspected or blamed, has proved his "shrewd" suspicions to have been groundless. Love, like God, hates sin, but loves to "cover" sin with a veil of forgiveness. It does not love to carry even the memory of evil. 7. Such an indisposition "to think evil," in our common phraseology often appropriates to itself, in a special application, the name "charity." But charity in judgment needs to be kept clearly distinct from laxity. Laxity plays fast and loose with the standard; charity is cautious in applying it to an individual man. "Toleration in some men's mouths means liberty to be as careless about religion as they are themselves" (*Guesses at Truth*). Kindness before truth is no "Charity." There are broad lines of wrong and right which no man who is a Christian can leave open to challenge, and by them it is inevitable that conduct [and, on similar lines, opinions or doctrines held] should be condemned. But he hesitates to condemn the *man*. The history of the word "heresy" shows how close, as matter of observation, is the connection between the state of the heart and will, and the results arrived at by the intellect. Yet whilst general principles of responsibility are clearly insisted upon, they are only with much reservation applied by "charity" to any particular man. The Divine Judge may exempt some when man's charity cannot, and indeed, with its knowledge of the facts, ought not to acquit. Man may, with the purest heart and from the very intensity of loyalty to Christ and truth, condemn in error. And, at all events, love "*thinketh no evil.*" Especially in theological controversy, whilst each must "contend earnestly" for the aspect of the whole Truth which is given to him and to his Church to teach and defend, motives should not be lightly imputed; and it should not readily be supposed that the holder of what seems a mischievous doctrine will follow it to its logical consequences. He may; Facts may be too strong for Love; but at any rate Love does not begin "reckoning up" the man and his doctrine by "taking evil into account."

II. **Love plans no evil.** — Here again Love is Godlike. 1. Need hardly nowadays take into any practical account positive religious persecution of any physical type. But there is need that a Christian man watch his own heart lest anything akin to revenge linger within. There may have been more than they know of personal feeling in some of the strong measures taken by professedly Christian men—who not infrequently were really such — against those who differed from them in theological opinion, or in some points of Christian or civil regulation or morality. The petty persecution, or annoyance, in an English village, which one form of religious faith may, with many a strange excuse and disguise to itself, devise against another, is something less than the love which "*plans no evil.*" In all opposition, whether of doctrinal controversy or practice, to condemn the opinion without bitterness, or distrust, or contempt, towards

the man, is difficult. But love harbours no such evil, nor dreams of it; and casts it out, if it be found lurking within. No Christian man would ever deliberately plan harm gratuitously; nor even as a part of a revenge which calls itself "punishment"—no matter how greatly he has been wronged. To do so would be so utterly incongruous with the very life of God—the life of Love—as to argue either that there never had been any Christianity which was more than nominal, or that a real Christianity had declined and died. "Good for evil is Godlike; good for good is manlike; evil for evil is beastlike; evil for good is devil-like," says old Mason. But what honest heart has not hated itself to find, if not exactly no unwillingness to see others "paying off his score" for him, yet at least a half-pleasure and satisfaction when some ill, which he would himself never have devised, falls upon the offender from some other source. The world's wisdom checks the feeling so far as this (in the words of a Baralong proverb): "Do not rejoice when your enemy falls in the path; there are more slippery places in front." A half-coward fear reminds a man tempted to ill-will that "curses, like chickens, come home to roost." But this chapter lifts up the whole matter to a higher level, when it says, "*Thinketh no evil*," *towards*, as well as *of*, *another*. Then the very wish to harm is gone. The thought of the offender suffering is foreign to the very instinct of the loving heart. It is a real pain to love to hear or see the wrong-doer suffer. Love cherishes no evil thought towards the offender. Godlike love has entirely and heartily cancelled the offence as well as foregone a penalty. ["Godlike." Yet in the Parable of The Unmerciful Servant (Matt. xviii. 23-35) it is to be noted that while, *as between servant and fellow-servant*, there is to be no limit to mercy and forgiveness, yet, *as between royal-master and servant-subject*, there may, with perfect righteousness, be a final limit to both.] Nor indeed is this the whole work of love when this is made perfect. A mere negative abstinence from indulged evil in act or feeling may mean a great triumph for love over nature. It is grace, sometimes much grace. But more grace, perfect grace, goes further. Not without the grace of the enlightening Spirit—we may gladly admit it—have Rabbis and heathen philosophers arrived at their maxim: "Do not unto others what you would not have them do to you." And "do" includes "think," "desire," "plan." But Love which is Christ's, which is God's, which is "a gift," goes beyond the negative precept, and says, "*Do* what you," etc. On the surface, indeed, Paul goes no further in Rom. xiii. 10: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, *therefore* Love is the fulfilling of the law." But he means more The work of love is not perfect until the man "thinketh no evil" because he is so busy thinking some new good towards his fellow-man, "even towards the unthankful and the evil." Even to such God is ever "thinking good." Whether in God or man there is no room for thinking evil in a heart full of love.

Ver. 8. *Love's Immortality.*—It will never fail—

I. **As an element of moral power.**—It is the strongest force in the soul. 1. *The strongest sustaining power.* In every trial and sorrow, under every burden. It is the only power which can appropriate the upholding promises of God. These are all made to the loving. 2. *The strongest resisting power.* We have not only burdens, but enemies. If love preoccupies the soul, temptation will be powerless. No one can draw us astray unless in some degree he enlists our affections, and if love be centered on God we are immovable. Love builds around the soul an impregnable rampart against which the attacks of the enemy strike only to rebound. 3. *The strongest aggressive power.* We have burdens and enemies and battles, and victories to win. There is nothing in the moral

world so aggressive as love; a fire that encompasses with its spreading flames all within its sphere. Man can stand before anything sooner than love; the heart opens to generosity, kindness, love, when it closes utterly, with bolted door, against selfishness or sternness or wrath. 4. All the energies of the soul grow under the influence of love as nature under the sky of spring. It is the atmosphere of an undying life. It "never faileth."

II. **As a principle of moral unity.**—Isolation and division are repugnant to man's nature. But in confederations based on political sympathy, or material interests, or theological dogmas, or mere carnal affinities, there is no *soul union*, no coalition of hearts. Love alone can secure this. But we can only love the lovable; but this is Love, that it invests another soul with beauty, and makes him worthy of the love of his fellows. Love is the gravitation of the moral realm. By it Christ binds His people into one. As a principle of social unity, between class and class, between high and low, all sorts and conditions of men, it never faileth; it is the only bond which does not.

III. **As a source of spiritual happiness.**—Love is joy. *It casts out from the heart all that is inimical to happiness.* The passions of men are the real miseries of their life; hatred, malice, anger, pride, revenge, covetousness ever unsatisfied, like "fear," "have torment," the torment of hell begun on earth. Love slays or is slain by all these. *It creates all the elements of spiritual joy.* "Love sets all the strings of life's lyre to music, it brings the soul like a wandered orb from chaos, it links it to its own centre, and fills it with the light and life of heaven." As a source of all spiritual happiness and joy it never faileth. Remember, this love is a grace, a gift, a spiritual thing, not native to the heart; it is the first in order and beauty of the cluster, one and manifold, "the fruit (not fruits) of the Spirit" (Gal. v. 16-24).—*Adapted from "Homilist," Third Series,* iv. 165.

Ver. 9. *We Know in Part.*

I. **This is true of mere secular knowledge.**—1. Hitherto hardly more than two men have arisen who seemed to know everything about everything comprised within the learning of their age: Aristotle in the ancient world; Lord Bacon in the modern. For the most part men are satisfied with the study and mastery of one or two branches of learning. The tendency in our time is more and more to specialisation of study, to sub-division of the field. An Adam Clarke will hardly again, singlehanded, write an extended commentary on the whole Bible. A Hume will hardly again write a "History of England." A single book of the Bible, a single period or reign or life—and that dealt with exhaustively—modern work tends in that direction. If men used to study a square mile with the naked eye, they now scrutinise a square inch with a microscope. 2. The man who most thoroughly knows his own section of a subject feels most fully how partial is his knowledge. The wisest student knows best how much is unknown. The beginner is the only man who thinks he knows much, or knows anything completely. As Burke said, the man who thinks he has got a *clear* idea may be quite sure he has got a *little* idea. Every student finds the little stream of inquiry on which he embarked in youth widening fast as the years pass on, till the very banks disappear, and just as he dies he finds himself launched out on a boundless ocean. Needless to tell the story of Sir Isaac Newton and his pebbles by the shore. 3. Then, putting together all the results of all the studies of all the wisest in all the ages, we still know only "in part." In our own days, more than ever, the range of knowledge is widening fast; the firm conclusions of former days, and even of a few years ago, are sometimes rudely overthrown; they always need revising, and are always being added to and enlarged. He would simply be ridiculous who should say that this

nineteenth century knows all about even the physical universe, or that no new applications of what has long been known will be discovered. We have unlocked the secrets of the Light, and have made the rays which started from the stars thousands of years ago tell what those stars are made of. Yet no man *knows* why moving a needle at one end of a wire which is being traversed by an "electric current"—that also a mere verbal symbol standing for an unknown fact—makes a similarly placed needle at the other end follow every movement of the first. Underneath all our boasted knowledge of the physical world lies the most profound ignorance of what in reality this Matter is, of whose forces and forms and properties we speak so confidently. We do not *know* what is the basis of phenomena. The metaphysics which underlie physics are a bottomless depth. Of what Spirit is, except that we judge by its manifestations that it must be totally opposite in nature to Matter, we are just as ignorant. 4. Obvious as all this is, it needs to be remembered, when bold voices claim and timid hearts fear, that this partial knowledge possessed by our century, and even that some particular scientist's (comparatively) thorough knowledge of his small part of the whole field of research, has somehow affected the certainties of the Bible and Revelation. "*We know in part*" means, "*Do not be in a hurry to triumph. Do not be in a hurry to fear.*" 5. But what really has happened is only this: The lifelong student of the square inch becomes an authority on all matters of fact lying within it. Nobody more eagerly welcomes his facts than the intelligent Christian. Yet others can often make better use of, and more justly value, the facts than the discoverer himself; can better co-ordinate them with, and measure their bearing upon, the results of other students in other similarly narrow fields. There is a penalty to be paid by the specialist; and however well he may know his part, he does know only in part. He is often ignorant of, or little qualified to judge of, facts outside his own subject, because of his devotion to his own. 6. Simple, if not exactly ignorant, believers may remind themselves that they too *know* a great deal about the facts of the spiritual world and its life. The Bible and the Spiritual World have been their field, and they *know* it as well as the scientific inquirer knows his. Many an unlearned Christian is a specialist here, and can speak with authority. Many Christian men of fair culture know more of the facts of physical science than do some—happily, not all scientists—of the Bible and its Life. Moreover, any man may by industry and natural intelligence judge of the facts of the natural world; whilst the mightiest intellect without the opened eyes for spiritual things is utterly incompetent to judge of them. 7. The past has its lessons, *e.g.* Galileo. We see that the early defenders of Genesis as against Geology were defending with quite untenable arguments a crude Geology at which even unbelieving science laughs to-day. Defenders and assailants alike knew only in part. As they do to-day. Triumph and Fear are equally premature and unwarranted.

II. **This is true of our knowledge of revealed things.**—1. Bible mainly concerned to reveal things not otherwise discoverable by us, and these only so far, and in such a manner, as required by its special purpose. We may almost press the phrase, "A lamp to our feet, and a light to our path." See how a lantern held low gives light to a traveller. On a small, inner circle it sheds bright light; all within that circle is fairly clear, *clear enough to walk by.* On the edge of this is a penumbra of fainter illumination; and beyond, entire darkness. The landscape around, the heaven above, are left unillumined. And the bearer of the lantern is himself not seen at all, or only dimly by a few stray beams reflected from the inner circle of clear

light. 2. What I am—a sinner; what I may be—a child of God, redeemed and saved; how the change from one to other condition may be wrought—by repentance and faith;—all these are within the circle of greatest light, though even it only gives sufficient knowledge of them *to walk by*. Just a little light as to how I came to be a sinner; but so little upon the question, *e.g.*, how the death of Christ makes pardon available for me upon my believing, that some of the greatest minds have given up hope of discovering any *nexus*. [Perhaps the *nexus* most nearly indicated in Rom. iii. 25, 26.] 3. Many another question, interesting, but not so urgent for solution, lies in the penumbra—half in light, half in shadow. *E.g.* if I am saved—what heaven is like; if I perish—what hell is; where both are; how spirits live disembodied; what the angels are and do; the nature of the resurrection body; —how we know these things "in part." 4. Then how many questions lie in the unrelieved darkness beyond. Whence came evil? Why did God permit it to enter? to continue? Why did He not—if He did not—redeem fallen angels, as well as fallen man? Are there any other worlds, moral, sinning, redeemed? Or has God worked out this supreme specimen case of His "manifold wisdom" (Eph. iii. 10) on our little Earth alone? Hardly a word! Hardly a ray! 5. Then how little light on Him Who holds the light to our feet. Just a little reflected upon Him from His creation, and from the few revealed facts. *E.g.* we find, (*a*) One God, one only, clearly insisted upon everywhere; but also (*b*) Three Names, s t side by side,—not more, nor fewer,—each spoken of as we speak of persons, and as we speak of God. Or we find two sets of statements—one leading up to the assertion, "Perfect Man"; the other to the conviction, "The True God and Eternal Life." We put what we know into orderly, scientific shape, and announce our doctrines of the Trinity and of the Incarnation. But the best-instructed theological system-maker knows best that he knows only in part. 6. Text, then, becomes a word of caution in all thinkings and speculations upon the subjects included in revealed knowledge. The powers of our mind are limited. We shall get no more facts: the Book is complete. All we can hope to do is reverently and patiently to study the narrow field of clearest illumination; the good men and the great minds have been rewarded, age after age, with a better knowledge of the old material. 7. A man, just beginning to think, just knowing enough to appreciate difficulties, and half feeling the force of objections, the answers to which, so far as any can be given at all, are as yet beyond him altogether, may remember with advantage that he knows, and never will get beyond knowing, in part. He may thus be saved from casting away—in haste of pride of newly awakened power, or in perplexity because of the fringing shadow around a by no means perfectly lighted inner circle—truth which he will afterwards find has moral certainty, probability of the very highest, sufficient at least for its reasonable acceptance as "a light to his feet." 8. Also, it will save him from the unwisdom of refusing to order his life by the moral precepts of the Bible, because all around them are unsolved and insoluble moral perplexities, lying in the penumbra or the outer darkness. Text says: "*Do not lose your head, nor in panic cast away difficult doctrines; be more modest than to suppose that you have settled all questions. Wait awhile, and, above all, do not reject the moral help of the Bible because there are "The Moral Difficulties of the Bible.*"

III. **True of the providences of life.** —1. Personal or domestic trial of many kinds staggers faith. To see a good man repeatedly and sorely smitten, or an "indispensable" man removed from the Work of God, when there seems no successor to arise. 2. God's remedy is generally not explanation, but faith. "Let not your hearts be troubled; believe!" "What I do thou knowest not now," etc. 3. Sometimes we do

know His reasons "in part." Years after, we see why He dashed our idol in pieces before our eyes. The greatly afflicted, godly man, *e.g.*, could tell you, if you won his confidence, of secret tendencies to pride, to love of the world, to neglect of God, which were thus continually kept in check; perhaps he sees that they could only thus be kept in check. 4. Suppose the story of Martha and Mary unfinished, broken off at the return of their messenger bringing no Jesus and no message from Him. Suppose the story of Joseph recovered in an incomplete papyrus manuscript from an Egyptian tomb, and breaking off at the point where, in spite of the assurance that "Jehovah was with him," it seems as if every new step, and even every refusal of temptation, has only helped him towards a prison, to lie there hopelessly under an unfounded accusation. How perplexing would be our knowledge of Jehovah and His ways, or of Jesus and His action! Because it would be knowledge derived only "*from* a part" (so the Greek, exactly rendered) of the facts. In our perplexed days let us understand that we are only midway in the story. Our wisdom, our peace, is to let the Divine Author finish the remaining chapters, and then let us justify Him. 5. So the common soldier, and even the subordinate commander, is learning the general's plan of campaign only whilst he is helping to work it out. It is too soon to doubt or criticise it; foolish to refuse to obey because the whole great scheme of operations is only known to the Head which has conceived it.

IV. Chap. ii. 9. Ver. 10 shows that Heaven is not meant: "God *hath* revealed them to us by His Spirit," Yet of the **highest, richest, ripest, Christian experience** and **knowledge** it is to the last true: *What we know, we only know in part, because we know only from a part of the fulness of possibility for us in Christ.* We never shall know otherwise than in part, even in this.

Ver. 11. *Childhood and Manhood.*

**Introduction.**—The natural a parable of the spiritual world. So we speak, because in that order we become acquainted with them. But probably we approach nearer to the order of the Creator's thought when we think backwards or downwards from the spiritual to the natural. The analogies which we discover rest upon the fact that the natural has been modelled upon the lines of the spiritual. As this life is to the life hereafter, so is childhood to manhood. [Cf. the use of this same illustration in 1 John ii. 12-14.] Yet the practical order for thought reverses this, and begins with the natural. The part of "*prophecy*" was soon fulfilled; the completed Word and the teaching Spirit have superseded it. "*Tongues*" soon "*failed*"; sooner perhaps than prophecy. "*Knowledge,*" in the special sense in which used in this letter from i. 5 onward, perhaps may be said to have remained, "*abiding*" until the eternal life comes, with its larger, fuller facts, and its "*face-to-face*" vision of them. Yet if it has long persistence, it has no eternal permanence such as "*Charity*" has, which "*never faileth.*" The character of this cannot be altered by the passage from time into eternity,—as we divide the one unbroken duration;—its mission and work will never be ended. But as to knowledge, **We are now in the childhood stage of powers and knowledge.** In the expression of what we do know ("*I spake*"), in the reception of new knowledge ("*I understood*"), in the reasoning to new knowledge from what is already given us ("*I thought*"), our limitations and language and methods are those of children. How our cousins—the angels; how our grown-up ("*perfect*") brothers and sisters who have left school—the glorified ones in heaven; must smile at such boasted knowledge and such wise talk of the Corinthians! "Listen to the pretty prattle of those children down yonder!" "With what schoolboy certainty of brand-new knowledge of the elements of a subject do these clever Corinthian men pronounce down there upon all things in heaven and earth!

And they are as proud of the little bit they have learned as a child is of his first, juvenile recitation which he has got by heart." There is nothing to despise about the child's lesson and learning. It is the pride which spoils all!

I. **Language.** — 1. *Mathematical science alone has a perfect language* adequate to express its truth. [Yet axioms and postulates, preliminaries to all knowledge, which must be granted though they cannot be proved, confess limitation to lie at the very basis of all mathematical knowledge.] Because being only concerned with matter and its relations its medium of communication is homogeneous with the matter to be conveyed. Shall we have by-and-by an equally adequate "mental" vocabulary, and be able without ambiguity or doubt to arrive at an absolute philosophy? (So queries Isaac Taylor, *Physical Theory*.) "Abstract intellectual philosophy (putting out of question the general rectification of sentiments and notions accruing from the influence of Christianity) remains where and what it was in the bright times of Grecian intelligence. The preliminary work of fixing the sense of terms and of advancing axioms has still to be done anew by every professor of these studies; and his labour is scarcely completed before it is broken up and cast away by his successors. This incertitude appears to admit of no remedy." (Taylor, p. 116.) 2. With what *imperfect a vehicle* of language are we furnished *for the expression of the thoughts and facts of the spiritual world here and hereafter.* They are almost entirely represented to us, and spoken of by us, in words which are condensed illustrations, whose appropriateness and serviceableness depend upon some real analogy between the spiritual fact and the natural illustration. [*E.g.* all the terminology of the doctrine of the Trinity—"Fatherhood," "Sonship," "Spirit"; the descriptive terminology customary in the matter of the rewards and penalties of the eternal world—"fire," "crown," "thrones," and the like; and to some extent the terminology of experience—"election," "adoption," "redemption," "reconciliation," and so forth.] The analogical term is true so far as it is intended to hold good, true for the point it is intended to illustrate; but term needs checking with term, analogy with analogy, the strength of one supplementing the weakness of another, the truth of one complementing the defect or (what soon becomes) the falsehood of another; and even thus the whole round of truth is only approximately expressed. 3. *Controversy* has oftener arisen from the defective vehicle on both sides with which thought has to be expressed, than from any other one cause. For this reason also is controversy, whether written or oral,—but especially oral,—of so little value in ascertaining or vindicating truth, even when prejudice, or passion, or interest do not interfere. Words mean so very diverse things to different ears, and on different lips. Quite fortuitous suggestions are started in the mind of both by the words of the opponent, and these again give a colouring to the words employed; till at last men get weary of bringing each other back to the point or of settling the meaning of terms, and they fight for victory, and not for truth. Or, as one mind wearies sooner than the other, and, to cover weakness or defeat, resorts to sophistry, the imperfection of the vehicle is again in evidence. 4. To the dwellers in the world of "*manhood*," and to our own "*manhood*" some day, how amusing, and perhaps even grotesque, are the views of the future state which men have imagined for themselves, and have preached to others; arriving at their strange result by insisting too precisely on the analogical and symbolic phrases which alone are given to us to use. Men have pressed the words of childhood until their heaven has been as fantastic as their hell. They have built up a future upon *words* derived from the present. They are the best words which could be given us; per-

haps the only language our childhood can be taught to employ. But the children should not be too positive about the things behind the words. They are not falsehoods because they are only imperfect vehicles of expression, but the more men outgrow their childhood the more carefully will they employ even the terminology of things spiritual. 5. The "tongues" point out, rather than lead us in, a way for thought and inquiry, as we see how the higher reaches of Divine knowledge beggar all the human vocabulary and create a new one of their own, intelligible enough to another man who also is exalted to the level of the world of which it is the "*tongue*,"—whether as Paul was, who heard and understood the "unutterable" tongue of "Paradise" in the time of his ecstasy, or as every "interpreter of tongues" became competent. So, again, the "groanings" of human spirits, led out by the Divine Spirit, after the future estate of the "glorified" children of God, become "unutterable" (Rom. viii. 28). All the highest experiences of the spirit soon pass language, and tend to incoherency, or to impossibility, of expression; even to the man himself they become vast even to vagueness, passing even the grasp of thought. Even our childhood—in both nature and grace—thinks and feels and knows more than it can say. 6. But when at last we move amongst the things themselves, we may hope for a language as "manlike" as our knowledge of the facts, not as the occasional experience of an ecstasy or of some special exaltation.

II. **Perception and reception of knowledge.**—1. Much, not all, of our knowledge comes to us conditioned by the possibilities of the five physical senses. The physical organ is as much a barrier to, as an avenue of, knowledge. We may (with Taylor again) speculate upon the possibly great enlargement of our perceptive faculties, which now are thus rather limited than helped by our five *adits* of sensation. "What of a body percipient all over, and percipient of new properties?" There will then at least be no distraction for thought arising from the need of attending to the body's wants. Nor any hindrance from the varying degrees of bodily disorder or sickness. We need be no materialists to understand the suggestion that perhaps a perfect bodily organisation might permit of a plenary memory. Now, not only are the past leaves never wholly open before us, but also "the paper is frail and the ink fades, so that a complete record is never kept, and old or hasty or careless records become easily illegible" (Taylor, p. 75). 2. Even the mental capacity is manifestly as yet only that of childhood. [Story of Augustine, pondering his work on the Trinity, watching the child digging a hole in the sand of the seashore. "What for, child?" "To put the sea in!" "What else am I doing, to try to apprehend the being and the manner and existence of God?"] "Plunge the gill-pot into the ocean, and it will only hold a gill-potful" (Maclaren; *coram me*, H. J. F.). Because of our natural limitations, as often as because of our moral unreadiness, must He say to us: "I have many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John xvi. 12). If it "doth not yet appear what we shall be," it is no desire for reticence or concealment which hides our future estate and its "*manhood*" from our "*childhood's*" knowledge. It is in great part the impossibility which confronts and baffles the teacher of the child, when he attempts to convey some idea or fact to which there has been nothing analogous in the experience or acquired knowledge of the pupil. The child cannot comprehend the man. "You will understand when you get older. I cannot explain to you yet." When, *e.g.*, bereaved hearts go out into the obscure hereafter, with yearning arms outstretched following the dear one, and asking the always recurrent round of questions about the other life—"what

they are like there," "how we shall meet them next," "where they are," and so on—may we not believe that the sympathetic Elder Brother Who has done so much to bring life and immortality into clear light, would gladly comfort these hearts by telling more, if only it could be told? "What is heaven like?" "I will tell you when we meet there." The child must stop there. We can only *grow* past that barrier to knowledge.

III. **Reasoning to and search after new facts.**—1. Will there ever be an immediate knowledge of facts, an intuitive perception of truth? It was said of Clerk Maxwell that it seemed almost impossible for him to reason wrongly on a problem of mathematics applied to physical inquiry. Can we conceive that power, exceptional, and even in him limited to its one topic, extended to all topics, and that in all men? Some men seem to possess a power of "shorthand thinking" which is suggestive of a world where the power may be enlarged and the process be abbreviated. [True, to us the *process* of inquiry has a charm; but that is a means, not an end, an arrangement to make the scholar more willing to take the trouble over "*childhood's*" lessons.] 2. "A considerable portion of abstract science stands under this condition, and is assented to rather because the denial of it involves some impossibility than because the truth itself can be brought to stand out clearly to view" (Taylor, p. 101). *Reductio ad absurdum* is a confession of our "*childhood*" and its limitation of thought. 3. There is the danger of *specialisation* in study, though this is a necessity, and on the whole a good thing. [See Homily on "We know in part." See again Taylor, p. 94:] "This division of labour in the world of mind . . . is peculiarly disadvantageous in its bearing on the elevated themes of theology, which, because they are in the most absolute sense universal, are not to be apprehended by any single faculty of the mind, but stand in such a manner related to our entire intellectual and moral constitution, as that it is *only when every faculty in harmonious and simultaneous exercise is actively engaged upon them* that they can be readily embraced." But this is "*childhood*" passed and "*manhood*" come. 4. How we are beset with prejudices and fallacies at every step! How easily deceived by self-interest! How we blunder and stumble on our way to truth! How much we owe to accident! *And how much to Revelation pure and simple!* [*E.g.* the bulk of chap. xv. is bare revelation.] And yet the Bible itself is only a book "written for schools," for the scholars in the elementary, the lower, forms here. How seldom we see all round a truth! If we ever do! We know and argue "*in part*" [lit. "*from a part*"]. We are reading an "*enigma*," of which we have not yet got all the key. Like Tennyson's Lady of Shalott, we are doomed to see, not things themselves, but their images in a mirror, and that only of poor material. When manhood comes, the key to the riddle will be ours. We shall see into the very heart of things, as even now we ourselves "*are known*." We shall see things, realities, "*face to face*." [Cf. Num. xii. 8, and suggest] every full-grown man in Christ shall, with Christ, be a high priest who may go direct into the Presence, and "pure in heart"—adult in holiness as in powers—"shall see" and know God!

Ver. 13. *Greatest because Godlike.*—All three—Faith, Hope, Charity—are *of* God; but Charity alone is *in* God. He implants Faith and Hope *in* us; He shares Love *with* us. He cannot believe anything, or hope for anything; *absolute* knowledge shuts out faith and hope. We believe and hope, in our partial ignorance; He can only know. There is a degree of pain in Faith and Hope which is incompatible with the absolute rest and fulness of happy satisfaction of His nature. Faith often brings strain upon heart and mind; Hope is itself really a disquiet,

something lower than rest, even though there be an element of pleasure in it [which distinguishes it from the anticipation of Fear].

I. **Love brings the rest of God into the life.**—"He will rest in His love" (Zeph. iii. 17) is an incidental illustration of the perfect Rest of the nature of God who is Love. Just as the one absolute Wrong, the one absolute Sin, under all conditions of life—human, angelic, diabolic, creaturely—is "a Lie" with its "Darkness"; as the one absolute Holiness, common to God and to His creatures, is "Truth," "Light"; so the one absolute Happiness, common to God and to His intelligent creatures, is Love. Truth and Love are the two facts which, without modification of definition, can be lifted up from the creaturely life and associated with and attributed to the Divine. They are "true in Him and in us." They have come down from Him to us. How much of the pain of life is created by man's own passionate, evil heart! Circumstances are not men's curse, except when their heart makes them such. How happy, *e.g.*, would many a man be—with abundant reason to be happy—if it were not for "*envy*" (ver. 4) of some other who started with him in the race of life, and who seems to have outstripped him in wealth or position and social consideration! All the good he has is spoiled because he has not that other man's "good." Love would help him to enjoy his own, and would give him an added joy in the happiness of his companion who is no longer his competitor. Is any life more uneasy, more full of unrest, than that of the "unseemly," "self-vaunting," "puffed-up" man who is ever "seeking his own"? The simplest word is a "provocation," where none was intended; the diseased sensitiveness of vanity "thinks evil of" and construes into a slight, or an insult, the most utterly innocent act. There is a horse-leech hunger for praise ever craving "more" and "more"; even flattery is better than nothing; yet lingering good sense will often penetrate its disguise, and shrewdly enough, but to the bitter disappointment of the vain heart, discern its worthlessness or perhaps even its intention covertly to mock or to sting. Everybody is suspected of an intention to give less than due consideration; nobody is quite trusted to be simply, sincerely, directly kind in anything said or done or intended. A wretched life is often that of the man or woman of "society," the very breath of whose nostrils is the homage of others, whose life is a long struggle for social precedence; "first in a village rather than second at Rome!" How great the deliverance wrought by the love of vers. 4, 5! How great the rest! And where evil has been intended, it may be dealt with in either of two ways. It may be taken at the worst construction and valuation; it may be pondered and brooded over, with a creative power in the brooding which can create a world of ordered and intended evil intention out of nothing! It may be talked of, growing more and more disquieting as each word unconsciously gives it an exaggerating touch, until it blots out all the brightness of life, and is a cloud of blackness overhanging all. The love that "covers," that "hopes" against facts, that "suffers long" and "endures," that, above all, is actively kind to even the wrong-doer,—that brings rest. No lubricator for the inevitable frictions and irritations of life like Love! The proud man, the boastful man, the passionate, angry man, the envious man, the suspicious man, the covetous man,—they are perpetually creating for themselves occasions of pain and disquiet. They "rub everybody the wrong way"; everybody "rubs them the wrong way." Life is not God's, but the devil's; not heaven, but hell. Life is torment, not rest. But God's life is rest. Love sets the "grain" of life another way; it grudges no man what he has; it is thankful for what itself is; it keeps a deaf ear and a blind eye for much that could only give pain if it were attended to, or admitted into

the heart; hoping much; judiciously, forbearingly, patiently, ignoring a great deal. Life grows brighter; things run more smoothly. Even as a point of practical prudence, and of personal peace and happiness, love is the better working principle, and in its self-contained, satisfied resourcefulness would give peace—a peace not unworthy to be a far-off, yet true, adumbration of His peace Who within Himself has an all-sufficient, all-satisfying fulness and perfect peace. And this must needs be so entirely the fruit of a new heart, renewed by grace in the image of God, that on this account also love brings contentment, rest, peace.

II. **Love imitates God.**—The word is Paul's. "Be ye imitators of God as beloved children, and walk in love, even as Christ loved you," etc. (Eph. v. 1, 2); which again stands in the closest relation to iv. 31, 32, that bids Christian men to put away "wrath and bitterness," and a train of other evil passions, and, above all, to "forgive," with a "tenderhearted kindness," not unworthy to be compared with the love of "God in Christ" which forgave them. The paragraph here, vers. 4-7, obviously contains some particulars [*e.g.* "believeth," "hopeth"] which can find no parallel or precedent in God. But it may well be studied in the light of the example of Jesus Christ, Whose love to sinners may have been the germ of the revelation to Paul of this noble grace, Charity, and of its Divine pre-eminence. In the only passage where Christ speaks of His "*heart*" (Matt. xi. 29) He is "meek,"—a trait which is not less precious that it is so human in its conception and presentation of Him. If He were not "meek," what hope had there often been for sinful men, refusing His appeals, ignoring His claims to their allegiance, repaying with rebuff His loving appeal to them? That He is the embodiment of a Divine Love which "*suffereth long*" and "*endureth all things*," is the very hope of men. It is an instructive comment upon "*is not provoked*," to read the sequel (Matt. xii. 9-21) of the story of the healing of the withered hand. The Pharisees were provoked to a plot of murderous malice. How shall Jesus reply to it? The same power which had restored the man's hand might well "wither" all theirs into helplessness. Indeed, He who could so heal could kill. What will He do to such men? What He actually did was to "withdraw Himself from them"; in kindness to them simply putting it out of their power as yet to compass His death, by getting out of their way and going quietly somewhere else. What were they as against Him but "bruised reeds" which a touch would have broken? What to His holiness but the offensive, smoking lamp-wick which prompts every man who smells it, to make an end of the offence by extinguishing the remains of fire? But no; "He shall not strive nor cry." [Shall we say "shall not behave Himself unseemly"; or that "Divine Power shall not"?] Such "bruised reeds He will not break . . . *until*," etc. Love brings the judgment to an issue, either in a victory of coercive power, which constrains outward submission, or of inwardly subjecting force, which wins a victory over a willing captive, who is conquered by, and assimilated to, the Love that conquers. With how much in human hearts must Divine love needs "put up" (to use the human, homely word) often through long years! What an offence to the very nature of God Himself must the heart and words and whole bearing be, of the man whom love's absence leaves to develop the self-assertion, the impatience of injury, the suspicious temper, the self-seeking, which are suggested by vers. 4-7! And how wholly like Christ is the love which "vaunteth not itself, seeketh not its own"! The "mind that was in Christ Jesus" is in point of exact and precise exposition (in Phil. ii. 4, 5) the spirit which makes every man "look also on the things of others." "Equality with God" was "His own"; but

He forewent its glorious manifestation and accompaniments for our sake, and "emptied Himself." The man who loves rather to stand aside, if so he may give another pleasure or honour; who, instead of fussing and fuming if he is not ever to the front, is content to go his way and do his work faithfully and steadily, day after day, whether it brings much recognition, or little, or none; who is content, if no principle is involved, nor any public interest, to "pocket" a good deal of opposition, injury, unfair or even mischievous comment and conduct; who is willing to yield perhaps more than a little of his absolute and abstract right and due, for peace' sake and for Christ's sake ("*moderation*," Phil. iv. 5), rather than be for ever "fighting for his right," or "standing upon his offended dignity," perhaps with a nervous apprehension of its being infringed upon which betrays his insecure tenure of his position; such a man is bringing down to the level of the trivialities of common life the same "mind," the same "love," which, far up amongst the spiritualities and the eternities, showed out consummately glorious in Christ. And "he that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father." Love that is Christlike is Godlike too. Somebody has proposed to borrow the painter's title, and to write over this chapter the words, **"Portrait of a gentleman."** It would be absolutely true to say, **"Portrait of a Christian."** And our verses (4-7), though not the whole chapter, in many points—not all—might be made to serve as a portrait of Christ. The love which assimilates us thus closely to Him may well be greatest.

Ver. 13. *Love Greatest.*

I. **Remarkable that the three great doctrinal writers** of the New Testament—Paul, John, Peter—all **agree** that the highest of Christian graces is charity, or love. Peter the man of humility, Paul the man of faith, agree with John (1 Pet. v. 5, iv. 8; 2 Pet. ii. 4, 8). What a relief such a digression as this must have been to Paul, after the long discussions of such questions as meats offered to idols, the pitiable disorders and sad misapprehensions in connection with the meaning and the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and the use and abuse of miraculous gifts! "We can imagine a new glow coming into his face, as he is lifted out of the murky fog of controversy into the light of heaven itself; and although it is needful for him, on account of the weakness of those for whom he is writing, to descend into the pettiness of their disputes once again, for a while he forgets everything save the vision of perfect love presented to him as a reward for his own reflection of it. In a still rapture he sees behind the veil, almost as he knows that he one day shall see, face to face, and in words that can never die, he reveals to us this perfect ideal of love, which would be man's could he but know even as he is known."

II. **What is this best of all possessions?**—Certainly not giving money to the poor (see ver. 3). "Nor a weak concession to the opinions of others, or a blind eye to their failings. St. Paul knew nothing of that spurious form of charity which refuses to find fault with opinions however erroneous, or with conduct however sinful. 'Love' gives a truer representation of Paul's meaning; but even this is open to misrepresentation, since it is frequently used to describe a love which, however pure, has in it much of exclusiveness and of self. Perhaps we best get at the true meaning of the idea by defining it as that particular kind of love which God has for us. *It is that desire to give and to bless which is ready to bestow itself even where it meets with no response.* This is the Divine Charity."

III. **Why this greater than all gifts? Why the greatest of Christian graces? In what sense greater than faith and hope?**—1. *It is most like God Himself.* In creation, God is love. In grace, God is love. "In glory, God is love. He can receive nothing that can add to His greatness. All that

He does is a pouring forth of love. . . . God is just, is true, patient, unchanging, all-powerful. These are all parts of His love. Without these He would not be perfect love."

2. *It is eternal.*—Gifts, however useful or attractive, fail. "They are concerned with temporal things, and are in their nature temporal. The knowledge of art, of science, of law, must one day become obsolete; although the lessons learned and the habits acquired in gaining such knowledge will be endless, the knowledge itself must cease when the subject-matter ceases. [But is there not a "knowledge" of Memory?] So long as there are our fellow-creatures in existence, so long is there scope for love. Even of those spiritual graces which will outlast all material things, charity is greatest. Faith and hope also 'abide' and are eternal. Faith is that confidence in God which can never be out of place even in the heavenly habitations; hope is the yearning after the wider future which we believe will never cease to be gratified fully and endlessly. But Charity is greater, an emanation from God Himself, reflecting itself in His creatures, and shining through them upon each other; the very atmosphere of heaven. In such an element we shall live and move and have our being. By such a perfect law shall we all be governed."

IV. **How to be obtained?**—"*Follow after.*" "*Have* fervent charity." A command of God *can* be obeyed.

1. *Ask for it.*—This fire can only be kindled from Heaven. "To God we must turn to learn what 'love' is. Only in His light can we see light; only because He first loved us can we learn to love Him and our neighbours in Him." "*The life of Jesus is a picture of the perfect love of God.* He was the Charity that suffereth long and is kind, that is not puffed up and doth not behave itself unseemly, that seeketh not her own and is not easily provoked. Had not the Lord to bear with men's littlenesses and vanities? Must not the disciple learn from Him to bear all things, to believe all things [? this; cf. John ii. 24, 25], to hope all things [?], to endure all things [yes]?" Useful to note down in the life of Jesus incidents which illustrate Paul's words. By such close and intimate study of Him—as an artist has some great work of art continually in his presence, that he may be filled with its influence, even when not consciously studying it—we learn, and are enabled, to imitate Him. At stated times set ourselves diligently to meditate upon Him; but always we may have the sweet influence of His presence, and may learn and win His Own "Charity."

2. *Do the things which love demands.*—There is nothing of the Divine Charity in loving those to whom we feel drawn. Rom. v. 8—"*whilst we were yet sinners*, God loved us"—points us to some one who has injured us, or made himself disagreeable, who is a successful rival, who has an unpleasant name. "Have you any unkind feeling toward such? Should you be secretly pleased to hear that something ill had befallen them? God has given them to you as an opportunity of cultivating charity. Seek opportunities of doing kindness to such persons! Speak kindly about them when their acts or characters are discussed. If it is in your power, promote their interests. If not, pray for them; you cannot long dislike a person whose name is daily in your prayers. Persevere in such a course; you will find your mind undergoing a change, even a renewal. Think, when tempted to be uncharitable, how the Master would have acted in your place. If you learn no more, you will at least learn this—"*Charity never faileth*"—*Canon Vernon Hutton, abridged from* "*Clerical World*," i. 371.

## *HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.*

[The whole chapter may be surveyed thus:—]

*Love*

I. **Sanctifies every gift,**

II. **Sweetens every duty,**

III. **Is the one bond between time and eternity, the earthly life and the heavenly.** —[*J. L.*]

Ver. 10. *The Perfect State.*

I. **What hope we have of it.**—Founded in human instinct. Confirmed by revelation. Secured by faith.

II. **What relief it will bring.**—The removal of all defect. Consequently of all sorrow.

III. **What happiness does it promise?** —The perfection of our physical, intellectual, moral, social condition.—[*J. L.*]

Ver. 11. *Human Development.*

I. **Man in the infancy of his being.**—His speech imperfect, childish. His understanding weak, limited, easily deceived. His thought and reasoning trifling, foolish, erring.

II. **Man in course of development.**—Under instruction and discipline. Accumulating experience. Looking forward in hope.

III. **Man in his maturity.**—Fully develcped in heaven. Bids farewell to the toys of earth. Has clearer perceptions, grander views, nobler objects.—[*J. L.*]

Vers. 4, 5. "*Envieth not,*" *etc.*—(For a Bible-reading.)

1. "*Envy*" one of the last things to die. A great victory of grace to be able to see another preferred at our expense, or with a comparison for us disadvantageous, and simply to rejoice in his prosperity.

2. "*Vaunteth not.*"—With the real modesty which means humility. Not inviting compliments on one's modesty. An outward modesty which is just transparent, transpirent humility.

3. "*Not . . . unseemly.*"—Acts with a fine sense of propriety; no conventional *polish* merely, or code-etiquette of drawing-rooms, but a fine sense of what is essentially *polite.*

4. "*Seeketh not her own.*"—Thinks of others, sympathises with others; puts them first (Phil. ii. 4). Yet wonderful to see how if a man—to be Christlike—postpones his own interests and wants, God takes care for these. Love will keep our spirit, remembering that others have interests and claims. The true happiness of family life is the resultant of competing, conflicting claims adjusted by love and mutual surrender.

5. "*Not provoked.*"—Most frequently by our plans being set aside. The man who always goes straight to his goal is apt to be impatient if others will neither lead, "nor yield," "nor follow," nor stand aside. Little interruptions of our plans the hardest to bear unruffled.

6. "*Thinketh no evil.*"—Lose the spirit of love, and you begin to suspect. The *worst* is then the *first* verdict upon conduct which occurs to us. (Then as in Homily.)

Ver. 12. *Now and Then.*—The child and the man—this describes the difference between Now in this world and Then in the world of light.

I. **Now we see all things in the "mirror" of our own experience.**—Impossible for child or man to travel beyond the stage of knowledge or experience to which he has reached in his ideas and judgments of things. The uncivilised barbarian of the wilds cannot be made to realise by description the wonders of a great modern city. Thus through an imperfect mirror of knowledge and feeling we now see: 1. *God*; 2. *The Saviour*; 3. *Heaven.*

II. **Then we see all things by actual presence and contact.**—"*Face to face.*" 1. *The glory of God*; 2. *The love of the Saviour*; 3. *The wonders of heaven.* So shall "we know even as we are known." The child becomes a man. Imperfection of knowledge and experience give way to the perfection of both. Then, like the Queen of Sheba, we shall feel that "not the half has been told us."—*Clerical World*, ii. 361.

## APPENDED NOTES.

*Fragments from F. W. Robertson on chap. xiii.*—"No man can conquer the world except by Faith (1 John v. 5); no man can resemble God but by Love." "There is a thing which we call high-breeding or courtesy; its name proclaims that it is the manners of the Court, and it is supposed to belong exclusively to persons highly born. There is another thing which we call Christian courtesy. The difference between the two is, that high-breeding gracefully insists upon its own rights; Christian courtesy gracefully remembers the rights of others." "The Spirit of Christ does *really* what high-breeding only does outwardly. A high-bred man never forgets himself, controls his temper, does nothing in excess, is urbane, dignified, and that even to persons whom he is inwardly cursing in his heart or wishing far away. But a Christian *is* what the world *seems* to be. Love gives him a delicate tact which never offends, because it is full of sympathy. It discerns far off what would hurt fastidious feelings, feels with others, and is ever on the watch to anticipate their thoughts. And hence the only true refinement—that which lies not on the surface, but goes deep down into the character—comes from Christian love." [Assuming that "tongues" meant a faculty of speaking "foreign" languages only miraculously, and *pro hac vice*, known to the speaker, he says:] "It is remarked that this faculty gives more cause for vanity than any other. . . . We see that the expert linguist is generally found more proud of his gifts, and more vain, than the deep thinker and knower: so with the Corinthians, this gift produced more vanity than the more useful ones of prophecy and teaching."

*The word ἀγαπή.*—The word is, in this sense, altogether peculiar to the New Testament. The word, as a substantive, is entirely unknown to classical Greek. The only passage supposed to be exceptional, one in Plutarch's *Symposium*, is a misreading. "The [corresponding] verb, indeed, is used in classical Greek, but in the lower sense of acquiescence, esteem, or caressing. It is in the LXX. we first find it employed to designate what we call 'love,' and it is there introduced to represent [the Hebrew] *ahab* and *agab*, both words expressive of passionate affection, drawn from the idea of panting, aspiring after a desired object. The substantive is almost entirely used for sexual love [Jer. ii. 2; 2 Sam. xiii. 15; Canticles throughout]. It only occurs besides, in a more general sense, in Eccles. ix. 1, 6. . . . In the New Testament, on the other hand, when used simply, and unexplained, it is equivalent to benevolence based on religious motives. The Old Testament (in the word *ahab*) exhibited the virtues both of conjugal affection and of friendship 'passing the love of women'; it exhibited also, throughout the Psalms, the same passionate devotion transferred from man to God; it exhibited, lastly, the same feeling emanating from God Himself towards His peculiar people, the spouse of His choice, the daughter of Zion. The Greek world exhibited in a high degree the virtue of personal friendship, which was, indeed, so highly esteemed, as to give its name (*φιλία*) to affection generally. Domestic and conjugal affection, strictly speaking, there was not. The word which most nearly approaches the modern idea of love (*ἔρως*) expressed either a merely sensual admiration of physical beauty or . . . an intellectual admiration of ideal beauty. . . . At Alexandria . . . benevolence to man as man, expressed in the word 'philanthropy,' occupies a very prominent position in the writings of Philo. But whilst this quality breaks through the narrow limits in which the passionate yearning of the Hebrew dispensation was confined, it loses its intensity. It becomes an abstraction to be panegyrised, not a powerful motive to be acted upon. In contradistinction to all these, and yet the crown and completion of all, is the Love of the New Testament. While it retains all the fervour of the Hebrew aspiration and desire, and of the personal affection of the Greek, it ranges through as wide a sphere as the comprehensive benevolence of Alexandria. Whilst it retains the religious element that raised the affections of the Hebrew Psalmist to the presence of God, it agrees with the classical and Alexandrian feelings in making its chief object the welfare of man. It is not Religion evaporated into Benevolence, but Benevolence taken up into Religion. It is the practical exemplification or the two great characteristics of Christianity—the union of God with man, the union of religion with morality; Love to Man for the sake of Love to God; Love to God showing itself in Love to Man." [Stanley, *Corinthians*, in chap. xiii., who proceeds:] "It is, perhaps, vain to ask by what immediate means the new idea was introduced to the Apostle's mind, . . . perhaps not too much to say that this is one of the ideas derived expressly from what he calls 'the revelations of *the Lord*.' It is, in all probability, from the great example of self-sacrificing love shown in the life and death of Jesus Christ, that the Apostle, and through him the Christian world, has received the truth that love to man for the sake of God is the one great end of human existence. . . . Until Christ had lived and died, the virtue was almost im-

possible. . . . We can hardly doubt that, as in the case of St. John, it was drawn from the example or the teaching of Christ Himself."

Ver. 13. *Love and Hope and Faith.—Love and hope* are united with, and included in, this faith. For faith's appropriation does not take place without love's surrender. All hearty appropriation requires surrender to that which we appropriate, whether such appropriation result from faith or knowledge. All true knowledge requires that we should both love and be engrossed by the object to be known. I cannot fully believe in and accept the love of another, unless there is the surrender of love within my own heart. So neither is religious faith unaccompanied by love. Love is the present life of religion. And this present life is accompanied by hope's assurance of the future, for God is a God of the future, and I cannot rejoice in present communion with Him without being happily certain of enjoying it in the future. Love and hope combine with faith in the one harmonious whole which we designate the religious life.—*Luthardt*, "*Fundamental Truths*," 155.

Ver. 13. *Charity.*—In the New Testament this is reserved for man's widest obligation to his neighbour; it is the one term which is common to heaven and earth in this sense. It is more than the limited love of the brethren which in us answers to God's favour to His own; St. Peter makes the distinction very clear, "*and to brotherly kindness, charity*" (2 Pet. i. 7). This noblest of all the graces belongs by prescriptive right to all departments of ethics. As appointed to regulate the universal relations of mankind, it has a very wide family of virtues under it, which may be subdivided as in a certain sense active and passive, or rather positive and negative. 1. It is **Philanthropy** in the conventional use of the word to signify practical care for the well-being of the race which knows no limits, but extends, whether as Benevolence or Beneficence, to man as such. The word φιλανθρωπία, however, is used only of God; it is not used expressly of the God-man, though the only passage in which it occurs attributes this sentiment to **God our Saviour. Kindness** is natural regard to our kind; therefore not employed to denote the Divine regard, for which the word is Lovingkindness, though this is extended to all the works of the Divine hand. Charity, or love, as the duty which every man owes to his fellow-man, presides over a wide range of obligations, from the supreme **Self-sacrifice** which is ready "*to lay down our lives*" in imitation of Him who "*laid down His life for us*" (1 John iii. 16), down to the gentlest act of **Courtesy** which sheds its charm upon common life, blending love and justice into one. 2. But its most impressive exhibitions are such as are called forth in imitation of the Divine charity. Such is **Mercy**; strictly speaking God alone can be merciful; but in the same sense as man may "sin" against man he is bound to be "merciful" to the offender, and to forgive him, if need be, *seven times in a day*. . . . Longsuffering belongs to God alone; we, following the Divine example, are required to practise **Forbearance**, which is the disposition not to press to the uttermost our claims against a fellow-creature. This is by the Lord called **Compassion**, and **Pity**, and **Forgiveness**: "*Shouldest thou not have had compassion . . . as I had pity?*" etc. (Matt. xviii. 33). All these affections towards universal man are required of those who bear the Divine image as restored in Christ. Throughout the New Testament this unlimited charity, meditating the most unbounded forbearance, is inculcated as a grace taught of God to those who in union with Christ partake of His Spirit. Our Lord denounces the vice that seems to honour love while it robs it of its perfection as absolutely universal. . . . "*Love thy neighbour, but hate thine enemy. But I say* unto you," etc. (Matt. v. 43, 48). St. John, in his last Epistle, the supplement and complement of all Scripture, gives this its strongest expression. He, like all the writers of the New Testament, but more directly than any other, makes the charity of redemption the standard of universal duty: "*Hereby perceive we love. . . . He laid down His life. . . . We ought,*" etc. (1 John iii. 16). Not for the brethren only, however; these words must be conformed to the precept of the Saviour, who commends to us the perfection of the Father's impartial love as our standard. And if the love of God in the Atonement is made the example, it is made the source of our strength to copy it. "*If we love one another*, **God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us.** *Hereby* we know . . . **He hath given us of His Spirit**" (1 John iv. 12, 13).—*Dr. Pope*, "*Comp. of Theol.*," iii. 233.

*Faith and Hope.*—Faith differs from hope in the extension of its object, and in the intension of degree. *St. Austin* [*Enchirid.*, c. 8] thus accounts their differences. Faith is of all things revealed; good and bad, rewards and punishments; of things past, present, and to come; of things that concern us, and of things that concern us not: but Hope hath for its object things only that are good and fit to be hoped for, future, and concerning ourselves: and because these things are offered to us upon conditions of which we may so fail as we change our will, therefore our certainty is less than the adherence of Faith; which (because Faith relies only upon one proposition, that is, the truth of the Word of God) cannot be made uncertain to themselves, though the object of our Hope may become uncertain to us, and

to our possession. For it is infallibly certain that there is heaven for all the godly, and for me amongst them all, if I do my duty. But that I shall enter into Heaven, is the object of my Hope, not of my Faith [?]; and is so sure, as it is certain I shall persevere in the ways of God.—*Jeremy Taylor*, "*Holy Living*," iv., § 2.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### *CRITICAL NOTES.*

Ver. 1. **Follow after.**—Taking up the thought of a "way," xii. 31; as this whole verse resumes the theme of xii., after the digression or episode of xiii. "*Pursue*" *love;* righteousness (Rom. ix. 30, etc.; 1 Tim. vi. 11; 2 Tim. ii. 22; cf. Phil. iii. 14); peace with all men (Heb. xii. 14; 1 Pet. iii. 11; Rom. xiv. 19); good (1 Thess. v. 15); hospitality (Rom. xii. 13). "We *pursue love* by watching against and resisting everything contrary to it, by prayer and by the effort to believe that what we ask God will give, by pondering God's love as manifested on the cross of Christ that thus we may experience its transforming power, and by endeavouring to (Rom. xiv. 15) 'walk according to love'" (Beet). Note, "*gifts*" is (as in xii. 1) supplementary, but rightly so. Also note "*yet*" (R.V.); there should be no exaggeration, even of love, at the expense of other things in the spiritual life. "'*Follow*' marks the persistence, '*desire earnestly*' the energy and earnestness of the search" (Ellicott). **Rather.**—"Seek any gift, all gifts, only in the path of love; and, in so seeking them, seek the useful rather than the showy."

Ver. 2.—Observe throughout that "*unknown*" (A.V.) is inserted erroneously; it is no question merely of foreign languages. **To God.**—As in Acts ii. 11, x. 46, 13-16, the matter spoken "*in a tongue*" was ecstatic [prayer (ver. 14) or] *praise*. The man was, so to speak, closeted with God in the shrine of *his spirit* [regarded as influenced and filled by the Spirit]; his experience is analogous to that of 2 Cor. xii. 1-4, only here he speaks, not hears, "unspeakable things," and no quasi-local transference is suggested. He is speaking "*mysteries*," *i.e.* things which, as a matter of fact, are concealed, but, given the qualified interpreter, may be readily communicated to the listeners around. But the "*interpreter*" must also be a man with a *charism*, himself therefore, for the time being, moving in, or at least in communication with, that inmost world of spiritual things where his fellow-worshipper is thus ecstatically holding converse with God. Without such a helper the listeners "*hear*," yet "*do not hear*." (See margin, and cf. Acts ix. 7, xxii. 9.)

Ver. 3.—Notice the more exact R.V., "*speaketh edification*," etc. "He builds up the inward life, . . . gives counsel to the mind, and comfort to the heart" (Ellicott). Good verse as casting light upon "comfort," "comforter," etc. Here are παράκλησις and "*comfort*" together, in clear, if not wide, distinction. Stanley notes that "Barnabas," lit. "Son of Prophecy," is in Acts iv. 36 rendered "Son of παράκλησις." Beet (like Ellicott and Evans) keeps "*exhortation*," words prompting "to action" (Rom. xii. 1).

Ver. 5. **All.**—Then the gift was a desirable thing to possess. **He interpret.**—*I.e.* the speaker in a tongue himself. The same person might enjoy both gifts.

Ver. 6.—Notice the "*but*," *i.e.* "since there is no edification without interpretation." Also "*by way of*," as in vii. 6, etc. Evidently, too, the sense is "**unless I also speak**," etc. "*Revelation*" and "*prophesying*" are extraordinary, "*knowledge*" and "*teaching*" are ordinary, methods of gaining and of communicating knowledge respectively.

Ver. 8. **Uncertain.**—Not making distinguishable the special "bugle-call" intended.

Ver. 9.—The physical organ, the *tongue*, is here meant, as shown by the analogy with musical instruments here traced out, and by the grammatical form of the phrase, "*by* the tongue"; there is really no "*with*" in, *e.g.*, ver. 6. **The air.**—Cf. ix. 26.

Ver. 10. **So many.**—"Fill up the number according as you think, or as you may know the fact happens to be. No matter exactly how many." The "*tongue*" was a true language, but not spoken or understood in this world of men. From the inarticulate though significant sounds of instruments, which all convey their meaning, he now passes to all articulate sounds of human languages, not one of which is of course really meaningless. Yet it can say nothing to the man who does not happen to understand it or use it as his native dialect. *Quâ* that particular language he is a "*barbarian*."

Ver. 13.—Choose between (1) "*that he may interpret*" *during* his ecstasy, or (2) *after* his ecstatic condition. Both find support. [Both cases might surely be actually exemplified; why "choose"?]

Ver. 14.—"Take prayer as a particular case, illustrating my general principle." "*Sing*" another (ver. 15), "*bless*" (ver. 16).

Ver. 15. **Spirit . . . understanding.**—The latter word, with its strong contrast to the former, and both read in the light of the chapter, fix "*spirit*" as meaning the human "*spirit*," though under the influence of the Spirit of God, as nearly always with Paul. Observe "*spirits*," the literal, marginal rendering in ver. 12. The "I" is not necessarily so precisely personal, as that this should express "Paul's resolve." As to singing, see Eph. v. 19; Jas. v. 13.

Ver. 16. **Bless.**—Not to be restricted to the special "*blessing*" or "*thanksgiving*" ["but little distinction can here be drawn" (Ellicott)] at the Eucharistic Supper. (But see Appended Note.) **Filleth the . . . unlearned**—Dean Alford amusingly protests that this has nothing to do with the parish clerk of the old order in English Churches! Obviously is meant: Any person in the congregation who has no "gift," or not these special gifts; who is, in regard to those who are exercising them, an outsider and "*unlearned*." ["*Unlearned*" in the old sense, now become a vulgarism for "*untaught*."] No distinction suggested between officials and private members. Such "sharply marked distinctions . . . do not seem to belong to this period" (Ellicott).

Ver. 19. **In the Church.**—"Whatever I do in private."

Ver. 20. **Understanding.**—Not the word used in, *e.g.*, ver. 15. See R.V. **Men.**—Lit. "*perfect*," as ii. 6, well expounding that frequently used word. **Malice.**—Wider in meaning then than now.

Ver. 21.—Quoted (freely) from the LXX. of Isa. xxviii. 9-12, so freely that it is scarcely more, as Paul uses it, than a happy parallel case; for his purpose "happy" in two particulars above all: (1) the barbarian language of the Assyrian invaders was, like the "*tongue*" in Corinth, unintelligible jargon to the ordinary listener; (2) and of more importance, each was *a sign*, not a mere wonder, but a *significant* wonder, to "an *unbelieving*" age. The presence of men who should speak strange talk in the land of Israel would in itself be a token, a real message, of the will, the displeasure, of God to His unbelieving people, who had scoffed at the simple, plain talk of Israel to them ["line upon line," etc., "as if he were talking to little children"; cf. ver. 20]. So the unintelligibleness of the "*tongues* was a mark rather of the aloofness than of the nearness of God; rather of their low spiritual tone than of His full favour. Good as it was (ver. 39), "*tongues*" was a gift lower than the best. Ellicott would not supply in the case of prophecy the italicised words of the R.V., preferring the A.V. Rightly.

Ver. 23. **All.**—Supposing an extreme case. **Unlearned.**—As above, "outsiders," though more literally still here; persons, casually or from curiosity, "dropping in"; whether simply "outsiders" or distinct and pronounced "*unbelievers*."

Ver. 24. **Convinced.**—Add the R.V. and its margin. [So John xvi. 8, which is well expounded by the facts of the Day of Pentecost, the first, earliest example of this particular operation of the Spirit.] **All.**—As each prophet in turn speaks. **Judged.**—Cf. ii. 14, 15, ix. 3, x. 25, 27. The familiar experience: "That preacher knows all about me." See this graphically given in Heb. iv. 13. See also how Saul fell prostrate before Samuel's prophesying (1 Sam. xix. 24).

Ver. 25. **God.**—Not *Christ*. The more natural first step for a Jew or a heathen would be to "*worship God*."

Ver. 27. **By course.**—*I.e.* in turn, not all springing to their feet at once. And if not on that particular occasion, then he may get his "*turn*" at another time.

Ver. 29. **Judge.**—Different word, of the same family, to that in ver. 23. Here meaning, using the gift of "*discerning of spirits*" (xii. 10); and judging whether the "*prophecy*" be really that of the Holy Spirit, and not the Devil's counterfeit (xii. 3).

Ver. 30.—Not necessarily breaking off abruptly, but finishing, and then giving "*silent*" hearing to the next.

Ver. 31. **Comforted.**—With the fuller meaning, as before in ver. 3.

Ver. 32. **Subject.**—To their own control. No man was so "carried away" by the Spirit (2 Pet. i. 21) as to lose the power to stop himself and be silent when "*order*" required it. [Evans sees an implied, contrasted thought,—that the spirits of the men "speaking with tongues" were not thus under their control.]

Ver. 33.—General, governing principle derived from the very nature of God Himself. Seen, *e.g.*, in Nature, where the judgment, equally with the moral sense, says that the disorder, the dislocation of a manifestly designed order, is certainly not from the Creator. The governing principle is one recognised, and its practical application urged in this chapter is acted upon, in "*all the Churches*."

Ver. 34.—In chap. xi., *re* the laying aside of their veil, there seems another trace of the tendency of the Corinthian women to over-use the equality with man which was so novel and important a point in their Charter, the Gospel, which said "*neither male nor female*" (Gal. iii. 28). **The Law.**—Used for "*the Old Testament*," as in ver. 21. "In the larger and public assemblies of the Church, which alone are under consideration in this chapter. . . . It

is probable that the Apostle had here especially in his thoughts the office of teaching in public, 1 Tim. ii. 12" (Ellicott). "And as to merely asking for information or instruction, let them do that at home." And Beet, very wisely: "It may be questioned whether Paul's absolute prohibition to women to speak in a Church meeting is binding now. It may be said that it was based on a position of women in the ancient world which has passed away; and that the commands of the Apostle, binding upon his original readers, are binding now only so far as the original circumstances remain, or as the commands are expressions of great universal principles. But the solemn emphasis and the assertion of Apostolic authority (so unusual to Paul), and the appeal to the parents of our race with which in two Epistles the same prohibition is supported, seem to imply that the prohibition sets forth a principle of universal and perpetual validity, and one resting upon the unchanging relation of the sexes. But this prohibition in no way touches the ministrations of women to women; and [N.B.] the gift in Paul's day of the prophetic spirit to women proved plainly that there was evangelical work for them to do. And there is abundance of such work now."

Ver. 36.—Same appeal as in ver. 33, xi. 16. "*Word of God*," the Old Testament phrase so frequently connected with the gift of prophecy: "The word of the Lord came unto us," etc. "Are you Corinthians the fountain of all law or custom for the Churches? Or have you been exclusively favoured with the communication of the Divine will. I also—to go no further—claim the inspired authority to speak and determine" (cf. 1 Thess. v. 27). Another test of the nature and origin of the Spirit at work in a man, in far-off parallelism to that of xii. 3. Almost: "Let any man who is really a prophet not only say, 'Jesus I acknowledge,' but let him also say, 'Paul I know';" like the evil spirits which just about this time were so confessing both in Ephesus (Acts xix. 15).

Ver. 37.—"*The Lord*" Christ, to whom Paul stands in this matter in the relation of Aaron to Moses, and (higher) Moses to God (Exod. iv. 15, and, particularly, 16). This and ver. 28 have many various readings, important, but not greatly affecting the homiletic use of the verses.

Ver. 38.—Moral causes are supposed under the "*ignorance*." Cf. the tone of Rev. xxii. 11. If the marginal R.V. be adopted, then cf. Gal. iv. 9; 1 Cor. xiii. 12; and the solemn Matt. xxv. 12.

Ver. 39.—Resumes *verbally* ver. 1, but with still further abatement of value set upon "*tongues*."

Ver. 40. **Decently**.—Cognate forms of the word are in vii. 35; Rom. xiii. 13; 1 Thess. iv. 12, etc.

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Whole Chapter.*

*Public Worship in the Christian Church.*

1. **Public, united worship is an instinct in the devout heart**.—The Church at Corinth assembled for worship (ver. 26). There may be a "*Church in a house*," many such. The worship there may be of the most spiritual, precious, acceptable; it is the prerogative, the honour, of a father to be the priest in his home; the patriarchal order lives on in the household life of the people of God. Two or three met in Christ's name form a *quorum* for constituting a true assembly having the prerogatives and privileges—particularly "There am I in the midst"—of the largest Church (Matt. xviii. 20). Many a solitary soul, cut off from fellowship and the sanctuary, offers a true worship in the sanctuary of the heart. But "the Lord loveth the gates of Zion"—the place of public resort, the very centre and focus of all the city's life—"more than" even "the dwellings of Jacob" (Ps. lxxxvii. 2), dear as every one of these and its little "*Church*" is to Him. And the people of God so love them too. The "citizen" (Phil. iii. 20) of the new Zion, where Christ is "Lord," should need a very good reason for being absent when his fellow-citizens "*come together*" (ver. 23) "*unto one place*." [Or "*unto the same thing*," *i.e.* with the same object of central purpose. *E.g.* in very exact translation, "**unto** the name of Christ" (Matt. xviii. 20).] 2. **The Christian "sanctifies Christ as Lord" in the temple and worship of his heart** (1 Pet. iii. 15, correct reading). Yet Christian worship is the "*worship of God*" (ver. 25), differentiated, indeed, from Jewish, or Mahometan, or "Theistic" worship of that same God by its founding upon the intermediation of Christ. The "*convicted*" outsider, who falls prostrate in the

assembly under the power of the "*prophetic*" word (vers. 24, 25), naturally does not go definitely beyond the general recognition that "*God*," as a Supernatural Power and Presence, is "*amongst them.*" The Christian worshipper also, whilst taking his "*Lord*" into direct account, is "*worshipping God*" too. His appearance in the place of assembly for common worship is in itself "*worship.*" It is a confession of God; in the face of the world which says, "No God" (Ps. xiv. 1), he openly professes his belief in a God and his sense of grateful dependence upon Him. All public worship means this; it is of the very essence of the act. Christian worship has specially its grateful recognition of the One Supreme Mercy, the "Unspeakable Gift." 3. **In this chapter also is manifest the very early** and very natural **use of the opportunity** afforded by the presence of so large a company, to "*edify*" the new or elementary life **by instruction**; in the case before us by "*prophecy*," which should embody a "*revelation*" given to the "*prophet*," or by a "*doctrine*" which should be the "*teacher's*" exposition of what he had learned by his special "*charism*" of "*knowledge*," an unusually direct and deep, Spirit-guided, insight into the new disclosures of truth belonging to the stage of Revelation reached in the Gospel days (ver. 6). This may be—ought to be—on the part both of the speaker and hearers an act of most real "*worship.*" It is such, when the act of teaching and that of listening are, in the intention of each, distinctly directed to the glory of Christ. There is no more really Godward act of the spiritual life than to listen, waiting to hear "*the word of God*" (ver. 36). 4. If in ver. 16 we find at the least a reminiscence of the Eucharistic blessing and the popular response, we have the cycle of the elements of Christian worship —praise (ver. 15), prayer (*ib.*), teaching (ver. 6), Lord's Supper (ver. 16)—completed. 5. And **the chapter** is **an instructive, typical case** of the **regulative, legislative method** of "*the Lord*" of the Church. "*The things which*" Paul here "*writes are the commandments of the Lord*," in regard to the public worship, not only of Corinth, but of "*all the Churches of the saints.*" It is conceivable that He might have "drawn up" a code of rules and regulations for the Worship of His Church, which, unlike human legislation, should in no part have, sooner or later, become inapplicable, or impracticable, or obsolete, by reason of altered circumstances or change of age, or of personal or national peculiarities or needs. Conceivable, inasmuch as to Him nothing is impossible. But it would be unlike His method. This chapter is, informally but very really, a code of regulations, or rather of principles, embodied in the special facts of Corinth and the comments of St. Paul. "Within the four corners" of these leading instances in this chapter must the arrangements of Christian worship be found, or be made, to lie. **Four points** fix the lines which limit the area of liberty. **Nothing must violate** or sin against: 1. Salutary Christian **custom**; 2. Seemly "**order**"; 3. The demand for **intelligent worship**; 4. Above all, "**edification.**"

I. **Salutary Christian custom**, particularly such as is based on Apostolic injunction (vers. 33, 37). (Cf. on this topic the material supplied under xi. 16.) There is a comity amongst Christian Churches which should not lightly be set aside. None knew so surely as did the Head of His Church how hopeless was uniformity of ritual or even of creed. It is only by speaking and acting in very broad generalities that agreement can be supposed feasible or be realised. Yet there will be a family likeness in the types of worship in the various sections of the Church, national and confessional. Distinctively "Christian" worship will everywhere be one in type. The diversities will be *family* diversities only. One such distinguishing line is the exclusion of women from the office of public teaching (vers. 34, 35). Such points of family likeness can be very few, but they should in all ordinary cases be respected. Paramount demands of "*edification*" may override everything else. But no one Church should set itself up as an independent source of authority, and least of all as having over other Churches

(ver. 38) any prescriptive power to insist upon its local speciality, or its "fad" of exaggerated individualism, as if it were a *sine quâ non* of Church order.

II. **Seemly order.**—The Church has a character which is at stake before angels (chap. xi.) and the world. Each Church, each member, is responsible for the keeping of its character.

1. *What is reverent and orderly* in Divine worship is a matter *incapable of* any *rigid*, of any *à priori*, absolute and universally applicable, *definition*. Demonstrative races, as, for example, the negro in the States or the West Indian Islands, will feel no impropriety or extravagance in what the self-repression of culture would revolt against as even socially "bad form," not to say religious irreverence. The Salvation Army congregation is not to be judged of by the same standard as the *élite* gathered in the choir of an ancient English cathedral, nor will they appreciate "reverence" and "irreverence" at the same estimation. Both sides need to be broad in sympathy in the matter. The peril of all culture in any direction is fastidiousness; whilst the less-cultured "heart" is not infrequently unfair to, and impatient with, the less-demonstrative character, and the form of service in Christian worship which it demands. Our section reminds us that where a fulness of the new life of the Spirit is suddenly given, there is often the appearance, and always the danger, of disorder. In the first outburst of the "*tongues*" at Pentecost, there seemed disorder enough. Peter's voice soon subdued all into listening attention, no doubt; yet during his "many words" of "testimony and exhortation" [Acts ii. 40, a very notable summation of *Pentecostal* preaching in all time], occupying as they did many hours of the day, his congregation would be continually changing, "many coming and going," the courtyard of the house filled over and over again with new faces; surely not without confusion. And when the appeals "cut to the heart," Eastern demonstrativeness and outcry would certainly beget no small tumult, as the inquirers eagerly ask from this apostle or that believer, "What must we do?" There is a disorder which is unseemly and may grieve the Spirit; there is a criticism of the "disorder," which grieves Him too. A modern analogue is often found in some time of revival, such as thirty years ago swept over the north of Ireland. A self-repressed observer, a keen critic of his own emotional tendencies, might stand in the midst of some large hall or sanctuary, in every part of which were little groups, in perfect independence of those nearest them, engaged in prayer, or conversation, or now and again stirred by fervent exclamations of thanksgiving or even a snatch of song. The place full of sound; now and again "a Babel" of tumult. No central conduct of the proceedings at all. Yet a little inquiry would discover that it was an *orderly disorder*. The "penitent" who would be the centre of one group knew well what he needed and was pleading for with God; they who helped him by their prayers or instruction were intelligently enough endeavouring to supply his need. The outburst of song or thanksgiving from another little knot was not an incoherent disturbance of the quiet or a meaningless addition to the sounds which filled the place. There was no "*confusion*," except such as in a soul or in a Church over which the life-giving Holy Ghost has been "brooding" (Gen. i. 2), will always mark the transition from chaos and darkness and death, to cosmos and light and life.

2. Yet *such scenes and conditions* must always be *exceptional*, and the accompaniments of the creative crises of the life, whether of the Church or the soul. They are for the sovereignty of the Spirit to originate and to rule. Their permanent and abundant fruitfulness will justify them. They are not to be cultivated or "worked up." There is no necessary "heartiness" in disorder or noise, or in leaving the conduct of religious worship to the impulse of the moment or the (not always too wise or spiritual) man; as, on the other hand, a

fixed order of worship, and quiet, undemonstrative, self-repressed bearing in the assembly of the Church at worship, need not be "formality" or "stiffness," or check the fulness of the Spirit's grace in the approach of each heart to God, or in the communication of blessing to each. Usually the "New Wine" is best put into the "bottles" of order and seemly arrangement. The exaggeration of orderliness is when the "bottles" are regarded—whether "new" or "old"—as too sacred for even the "New Wine" Himself to be allowed to stretch or burst.

3. *Especially* is this *true of the "teaching" element in Christian worship.*—Paul is not contemplating what in modern phrase would be called a "testimony meeting," or a prayer meeting. (Especially is this true in regard to the silence of women.) The raising of the dead soul is a sovereign exercise of Divine power, which may well be allowed to choose its own methods, and to have its accompaniments exempt from unspiritual criticism, if not from "spiritual men's" control. But next follows "giving something to the raised one to eat" (Mark v. 43), which lies within the fair range of human ordering, according to the best available judgment, though this of course not apart from the prayerfully sought aid of the Spirit of God. In Corinth the teachers—the very "*prophets*"—were found starting up, several at once. Each man had come full of his "*psalm*" or his "*doctrine*" or his "*revelation*," or these seemed given him at the time with an overmastering fulness of urgency of importance. Neither will the "*prophet*" who starts up whilst another is yet speaking wait, nor will the other give way to him and draw his own "*prophesying*" to a close (vers. 29, 30). The very purpose of the Inspiring Spirit was frustrated by such an overlapping of teachers, two or three delivering their message together. "One by one," says Paul, with Apostolic authority. Even the very "*tongues*" are to be "*by course*," *i.e.* in orderly turn. "*Two or three tongues*," "*two or three prophecies*," in each assembly—no more—are sufficient for each "diet" of worship. "Let that prophet sit down; this other wants to speak" (ver. 30). "But you are sinning against the liberty of the Spirit. You with your stiff, formal propriety, you are grieving Him! Who are you to close the mouth of a 'prophet,' so long as he believes that the Spirit has something to communicate or reveal through him? If you cut him short like that, or give '*only two or three*' opportunity to deliver themselves, whilst the rest, as much '*prophets*' as they are, must 'bottle up' their prophecy and carry it home again, you are restraining the Holy Ghost; the hearers will lose some truth, perhaps some truth they needed!" There is sufficient approximation to truth in this ever-recurring protest, to keep the "orderly" temper on its guard against the dangers of its very excellence. The "prophetic" grace which made Paul able, with inspired authority and wisdom (ver. 37), to "put his foot down" and definitely and finally to repress or regulate a gift as extraordinary as his own, belongs to an order which is past. But the whole matter is lifted up to and set upon a permanent basis, when Paul appeals to the very character and known manner of the "*God not of confusion, but of peace*" (ver. 33). The teaching work of the Church demands, in the very nature of things, order, propriety, attention, quiet.

4. In the ordering of the programme of public, Christian worship, *nothing should be admitted, nothing forbidden, but as subject to His sanction or revision,* Who, in every sense and in every way, works for "*peace.*" This will not lead to any uniformity of practice, it never has done, never can do; but it will be the guiding, testing principle to which practice should be ever adjusted. Nor is the truth of practice hard in that way to arrive at—particularly in the way of love (xii. 31)—in any given type of local or national Church. Especially when 3. and 4. are kept paramount.

III. The demand for **intelligent worship** and **teaching** (vers. 15, 19).—1. *Paul's Example.* "I speak with tongues more than ye all;—I thank God for it"

gives us an interesting, seldom-regarded, side-light upon Paul's character and work; it is a touch in the portrait of him too often omitted. But it is a perpetually recurring trait in his self-revelation in his letters, that he should go on to say, "I had rather, in the Church, speak," etc. It might be his "glory" (2 Cor. xii.) to hear the language of "the third heaven." But he lived very much and very practically on earth. He might draw support under his "thorn" from such "revelations of the Lord," and in the ecstasy of the "*tongue*," with its deep communings of his adoring "*spirit*" with God, he no doubt found strength and (in our looser modern sense) "inspiration" for his work; but to men he spoke with the "*tongue* of men" (xiii. 1). [True, by a not unfair accommodation, of all men of spiritual power. Jacob has "power with God" first, and then "power with men" (Gen. xxxii. 28). Of Richard Lynch Cotton it was said, "His mind was always engaged in prayer." The Rev. R. Wright said of him, "I was much impressed by his standing up in the carriage and offering up silent prayer before we started." His servant found that he must needs pause before entering his master's library; he might very probably otherwise find him upon his knees (Burgon, *Twelve Good Men*). A Sheffield woman, speaking the vernacular, described Rev. Joseph Entwisle, "Yon mon's *thick wi' God*." Of S. H. Smith, a Sheffield manufacturer, it was said (*Memoir*, by W. H. Tindall) that whoever heard him speak in any meeting of Christian people felt that he dwelt habitually with God, and came forth on such occasions to speak to men.]

2. *A contrast and a combination.*—The true meaning of ver. 15 sets aside a good deal of the customary and very devout exposition of the force of the contrast, "*with the spirit and with the understanding also.*" There can hardly now be any doubt that the "*spirit*" is the human "spirit," and that here, as usual, Paul's vocabulary is moulded upon the trichotomic scheme of 1 Thess. v. 23. (For homiletic purposes it will be sufficient, and all that is practicable, to make pictorial the relation between the "*spirit*" and the "*understanding.*") Regard redeemed manhood as a grand Temple, one of God's own building, in whose "inner man God in Christ may dwell" (Eph. iii. 17). The body and the lower faculties, the sensuous ones, of the natural life are its outer court, its Court of the Gentiles. Then within, court within court, lie successively the nobler and yet nobler ranges of faculties, which more and more differentiate man from the noblest of the creatures round him. At last is reached the Holy Place, the "*Understanding*," the intellectual part, perhaps the personal, where —grace apart—man most closely images, and approaches to, God. If the very animal creation share with him, and may tread, the great outer court of man's complex nature, they go no further; and at the inmost, within even the holy place of the "*understanding*," there is another, most sacred, spot, where not even the natural man, of understanding and intellect cultured to their highest of capacity, may tread. It is the Holy of Holies of manhood, the "*spirit*"; the inmost shrine, where God Who "is a Spirit" dwells and reveals Himself in glory, and where the spiritual man holds a fellowship with God, of worship on the one side, and of revelation and blessing on the other, which is a holy secret between them.

3. In that innermost secrecy, in the holy privacy of this Holy of Holies, the man "*speaking in a tongue*" is for the time closeted with God. In a holy outpouring of prayer and praise, and even of song, he is a high priest standing before God within the central shrine of His personality. The bystanders in the assembly may hear his voice, as it were through the thick, dulling veil of the physical organs, but their ear catches nothing of the sense of the ecstatic words of holy communion between him and God. The man with the gift of "*interpretation of tongues*" can hear, and can even report to his fellows; but

without that gift he and they are only in some outer court of their fellow-worshipper's manhood.

4. The man so favoured of God may well "*covet*" to enjoy "tongues"; he may well hesitate to "*forbid*" any man to make use of His gift; [to the cautious, cooler temperaments at Thessalonica, inclined to regulate very strictly, to discourage or suppress, the "*tongues*," because of the disorder and extravagance which were their ever-present danger, Paul says: "Do not 'throw cold water, upon,' quench not, the Spirit, in any manifestation of His firelike presence and work." To the men who had "*tongues*" or coveted them, who were liable to depreciate such a gift as "*prophecy*,"—"*only* the intelligible utterance of Divine truth in plain language!"—he says, "Despise not prophesyings" (1 Thess. v. 19, 20);] in the fulness of his own blessing and privilege he may well desire that "*all might speak with tongues*" (ver. 5). Yet it is a grace for the man himself alone; a gift for the man only; his face is set Godward in its exercise; he speaks "*to himself and to God*" (ver. 28).

5. True *it has an indirect use.*—It is "*a sign*" to the outside world (ver. 22). The "*unbelief*" of the world is something far deeper and more subtle than mere disbelief of any primal propositions about God or the things of God. It is a habit, not an act, of the mind and will and heart. As truly as it is said of "faith" or of "religion," so unbelief is "not merely a set of opinions, but a life." It becomes a dull, crass ignorance of, or a dead-set, apathetic indifference to, the unseen and the spiritual, which goes its way, and seeks its aims, leaving altogether out of the reckoning—and not desiring to include—anything higher than man, or beyond the narrow horizon of man's earthly sojourn, with its interests and consequences. The first, greatest difficulty in the recovery of lost man—*le premier pas qui coûte*—is the awakening of the soul from its indifference and death. In conviction of sin, the unseen and spiritual for the first time to any practical effect breaks in upon, and through, the hard, narrowing, incrusting "*unbelief*"; this high-raised and all but impassable barrier built around the understanding and the heart. God has many "*signs*" which should arouse attention, and waken the drowsy sense, to the fact and near presence of this environing, real world of spiritual things—God, the soul, sin, eternity, judgment; He has many occasions and instrumentalities and methods, of thus bringing close to the mind and heart in their unbelieving insensibility, Himself and the works of the Eternal and the Spiritual. Sometimes a Paul in his course meets a Felix in the course of a life of successful, high-placed, wicked worldliness, and for once Felix hears of "righteousness and temperance and judgment," and is aroused and trembles; strange providences—earthquakes that shake jailers of Philippi out of their sleep—do it; miracle did it ["If I . . . *then* the kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matt. xii. 28)]; the "*tongues*" did it in Corinth. A Jewish or heathen passer-by turns in to the little gathering, the former perhaps definitely hostile in his "*unbelief*," the latter simply "*unlearned*," with a quasi-neutral unacquaintance with all these matters (ver. 23). It may happen that such a visitor turns in at a very disorderly time, when many are uttering the strange "*tongues*," and all at once. It is a Babel of sound. There is a strange language being talked—if indeed it be a language at all, and not mere incoherent raving, which he hears. It may be that he turns away with a contemptuous laugh as he leaves the room: "They are a pack of madmen together in there!" But if it be a seemly and orderly occasion, when only "*two or three*" are exercising their gift, and those "*in turn*," first one and then another rising, and delivering themselves of what—though he can "*hear*" no speech—fills every hearer with awe; his unaccustomed heart is filled with awe too, as though the room were filled with a Presence, and as though another world, ordinarily a "*mystery*," were suddenly unveiled. If that be all, he may not

become a believer, but at least indifference is gone; the "*sign*" has spoken to his understanding; indifference is stirred by the new fear. The way of the Lord is perhaps prepared. A breach is made in the high wall of utter, careless secularity, and through it something more may enter, to the saving of the man. [To the children growing up in the congregation, to the heathen just coming within the range of the message of the Christian Gospel, the very ritual of the service may sometimes be in its degree a "sign," appealing to the attention through eye or ear, and impressing the thought with the idea of a supersensuous world.]

6. But more, much more, is needed. For the man's own worship this inner, God-directed communing may be enough, but *for common worship intelligent speech is required.* And, above all, if worship is to be a "*fruitful*" thing (ver. 14), if the Church are all to "*learn*" or to be "*comforted*" (ver. 31), and if the unbeliever is to be "*judged*" and "*convinced*" (ver. 24), then the "*understanding*" must be joined with "*the spirit*," or even a Paul will do little or no good. The high priest must come out from the holy of holies of the "*spirit*"; what he has seen and heard and gained he must bring out through the course of the "*understanding*"; there he may meet his fellows on more equal terms. And, lastly, his very physical organs must translate what is published in the understanding.

7. He who is to be of use to his fellows, the leader of their worship, the instructor of their life, the awakener of their conscience, must be *a real mediator* going in for men to God, coming forth from God, and for God, to men. He who has not first learned something in the secret place of the communing of the "*spirit*," he who has himself gone no further within than the "*understanding*," will be only an imperfect instructor of men. He will never lead their worship any further inward, any nearer to God, than he has gone himself. Above all, he will never carry the supreme credential of a "*prophet*,"—that his words reveal men to themselves, in all their sin and guilt and spiritual need (vers. 24, 25). Yet many a man's work is marred because, "*prophet*" as he is, his understanding does not translate his message into clearly stated truth, nor does he find a way for it to the understanding, or commend it to the judgment, of his fellow-worshippers. There is "an art of preaching" which needs to be learnt. A native "gift" of formal speech, of public address, underlies all pulpit success; it is the natural basis of fitness upon which grace does its work in equipping a preacher. But this needs cultivation and training. The greatest natural powers need furnishing; and whilst it is in the inner, secret place alone that a true message for God may be gained, yet the "*understanding*," at its very best of training and fulness of acquired knowledge, must pass the message through its own mint, and put its own form and stamp upon it. He who, under ordinary circumstances, cries down the office, or practically disregards the use, of the "*understanding*," in the man who leads the worship of the congregation, or is its "*prophet*" for instruction or conviction, is repeating the mistake of the Thessalonian or Corinthian who valued and gloried in the unintelligible "*tongue*" and, in comparison, rated low the less showy gift of "*prophecy*."

8. *Worship in an unknown tongue.*—Naturally, and properly, the Reformers of the sixteenth century strengthened their protest against the conduct of worship for (sometimes unlettered) German or English people in Latin, by appeal to this passage of St. Paul. Rome is not alone in having clung to a language which once was the vulgar tongue, but which has become unintelligible through change of circumstance. In the Syrian Churches the language of the Liturgy is the once ordinary, but now antiquated, Syriac. The very Brahmin does not now understand the language of the *mantras* he chants through life. The Parsee priest cannot translate the old Zend of the invocations

he uses. It is the vice of heathen worship to be veiled, to the point of being unintelligible to the people. All ordered worship should be on a level with the understanding of those of whose devotions it professes to be the vehicle, or to whom it professes to offer a message of instruction. The devotional part of the order of worship should at least be *intelligible* to the worshipper, "*else how shall he say Amen?*" (ver. 16). So the very music should help the *intelligence* of the worship. The didactic, or hortatory, or convincing should be *intelligent* in matter and in form, on its human side, as fit as "*understanding*" can make it, to accomplish its work with the heart and will, and to commend the message to the intelligence, of the hearer. It may be—it must be, or it is "*unfruitful*" and useless—"plain preaching." The great themes of the Gospel are worthy that the highest intelligence should match and measure itself against them. "Wisdom *is* plain to him that understandeth." But it is the noblest function of the noblest mind to bring these themes into a shape apprehensible by the humblest and narrowest. "*Unfruitful*" preaching is either (1) passing the understanding of the hearer, or (2) indefinite in statement, or (3) pointless and unimpressive in application [J. L.].

9. *Interpreters sometimes needed.—There are true seers who get real messages from God, but cannot "interpret" them* (ver. 18). They may print their message, or may speak to a select few who can understand them. But there are many, a much larger company, whose gift, and whose call and function, it is to popularise the truth given to the inner circle of these illuminated ones. The "*interpretation of tongues*" has its modern analogue to-day, as also has the office of the "*prophet.*" When the man who dwells in the holy of holies is also the man who comes out into the outer court direct from God's presence, and is the interpreter or the forthteller of the things he has seen and heard within, then the worshippers are led nearest to God, and the whole order of the service fulfils Paul's fourth requirement:—

IV. **Edification** (vers. 1, 2, 3, 6, 12).—1. The reiterated emphasis upon this point shows how *predominant in importance* this ranked in the thought of St. Paul. It manifestly takes precedence of every other consideration. [*Love* is not so much a "gift" as the very life in which the "gifts" should root themselves, and from which they should draw an all-pervasive character. Everything should be full of love. But next to love] Paul ranks prophecy above every gift. It "*edifies*" as does no other, and what will do this is his primary care. No doubt this plea has sometimes been made to cover some very wide departures from Christian reverence and sobriety, to say nothing of the comity of Christian custom. It has been said in their defence, "But you see that good is being done!" What has only roused the emotions and even the senses, unintelligent appeal to the feelings, a religious life built only upon the foundation of those feelings, have sheltered themselves under the same plea. The feelings have their place; "disorder" is sometimes an accompaniment of a true Pentecost, and justifies itself in its issues; but, under ordinary circumstances, **prudent order, seemly custom, intelligent devotions and instructions**, best promote **edification.**

2. *None of them is worth anything if it do not.*—Better, *e.g.*, that customary, beautiful order be swept away before the "rushing wind" of a real Pentecost, than that "the breath" of the Spirit should never breathe upon dead souls. **Order** must not become a fetish, a tyranny. Any innovation upon the established order in a Christian Church will need good vindication; but it can, and does, vindicate itself, if it bring men to the Foundation and build them up upon it. Paul reminds his readers (ii. 1-5, etc.) how the intellectual gifts and the graces of oratory may become a snare to the preachers and a difficulty to the hearers. In neither *order* nor *custom* is there anything so sacred but that real "edification" may justify anything.

3. *Edification demands a clear, definite, intelligible message.*—"*If the trumpet*," etc. Most hearers want from the "*prophet*" who stands in their midst, what is profitable, helpful, true. But often the week has been a time of ceaseless conflict, and in weariness they are ready to give all up. Just then does the speaker in the public service need to be "a leader and a commander to the people" (Isa. lv. 4). They want a man who can order their life for them. They will follow his "*trumpet*-call" if they find that he knows his own mind and gives no "*uncertain sound.*" He may put heart into the faint by his "certain" sound, *e.g.*, of confident proclamation of an Almighty Helper and Friend by their side in the conflict. [If it be the "joyful sound" of the Jubilee trumpet proclaiming that the lost heritage is to be had once more by its rightful owner, then also does its blast need to accompany a clear, plain, heartening declaration of the Atonement and its redeeming effect, and of the conditions on which this effect becomes available. An "*uncertain sound*" on this point may mean an eternally lost heritage, to some soul that hears and yet hears nothing.] The man who has nothing, or nothing definite, to blow upon his trumpet, had better stand aside for some other leader.

4. Paul suggests one remarkable piece of "*edification*"—the sudden arrest and conviction of a casual hearer (vers. 24, 25). He is the Jew or the heathen who came in during the "madness" of the "tongues" (ver. 23). This time the prophets are exercising their gift—"*all are prophesying.*" Their words are "*with the understanding.*" They are a message to his conscience. There is the "*sign*" once more, but there is sense too. He is laid bare to himself. Sin which he never saw and never suspected; a self which he never knew and never suspected; are disclosed to him. [The man known least to many a man is *himself.*] "*The secrets of his heart are made manifest*" to himself, and perhaps by open confession are made manifest to the assembled congregation also. ["The word cleaves asunder the soul and spirit, and discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. iv. 12).] In the presence of God he "*falls prostrate*" in awe and guilty shame. "The speaker might know all about me," many a modern hearer has said, in the presence of the searching Spirit of God. He confesses that of a truth he has found God amongst this people. If the Supper be the embodiment *par excellence* of the element of orderly, seemly, sacred, formal *arrangement* in worship, so also is such a "*conviction*" the chief glory of the *teaching*. No prophet should long exercise his gift without this conviction following the word he utters. If it be really the word of the Spirit through his lips, then awakening will be one of its constant credentials. Intelligent, plain, profitable, edifying words for the believer; arousing, alarming, convincing words for the "*ignorant*" and the "*unbeliever.*" There are preachers who will not learn; as there are hearers who will not listen. Paul might, but we dare not, anticipate the final judgment, and say, "*If he be ignorant, let him be ignorant.*"

## *SEPARATE HOMILY.*

Vers. 34, 35. *Woman's Place and Woman's Work.*

**I. How far Paul's words are binding.**—1. *Paul's pronouncements upon the position of woman in Christendom* and her relation to man are not to be reckoned as simply remainders of "Oriental" or "Israelite" preconceptions, from which even he, who wrote Gal. iii. 28, had not worked himself free. Nor are they to be regarded as merely intended to apply to a temporary phase of social life which found its typical exemplifications in Corinth or Ephesus in Paul's day; and as therefore without force for English or American life today. As to the former point,—whilst the human element in Revelation is to

be recognised, the Divine is not to be minimised. The abundant literary and historical material in whose light (say) the Epistles of Paul can to-day be studied, and that development of the historic sense in the students, which they share with the writers and readers of all history to-day, tend to obscure the fact,—ascertainable and verifiable on other lines of approach to and examination of the topic of Inspiration,—that the Spirit of God makes Himself responsible for the Book which is the product of the historical, or epistolary, or other activity of Paul and the other contributors to it. The judgments on this topic are Paul's; but not those of a Jew, only half-emancipated from the prejudices of his early education and training, on whom more enlightened or advanced readers may sit in judgment in their turn, and with fresher light review or revise his pronouncements. To assume this takes all finality, all authority, from Revelation on this topic or any other. As does the alternative suggestion. Is anything merely and only temporary put upon permanent record in the Bible at all? Rather, everything is of permanent value and authority, if even indirectly. If the temporary and "accidental" is put upon record, it is because in it is embodied some truth of abiding value. The temporary and accidental form carries a principle which is part of the universally applicable and binding Revelation of the mind and will of God. 2. Here Paul, in point of fact, does most pointedly claim for his *dicta* on our topic an absolute, Divine authority. He claims to speak as a prophet. Every true prophet will recognise the prophet in him. "*The word of the Lord has come*" to him; the words which he utters and bids his amanuensis write are "*the commandments of the Lord.*" [The assertion is made in regard to this one topic, indeed, or to the group of topics dealt with in this chapter. But it would hardly be denied that this is a test case, a sample case, and, that when coupled with Col. iv. 16 and 1 Thess. v. 27, it extends its applicability to all his Epistles and their instructions.] He also lifts the case, both here and in the two other places where the topic is formerly dealt with (chap. xi., and 1 Tim. ii.), above the level of the temporary and local. He traces the relation of woman to man up to the primal ordering of Creation. It is no novelty; it is no Oriental peculiarity; it is no wrong done to women by the men of the ancient world. Abused the principle may have been,—shamefully and cruelly,—until woman has become the slave, or at best the plaything, of man, the drudge of his idle, selfish, masterful will, or the vehicle of his sensuality. But the relation of subordination of woman to man is shown to be rooted in the physical characteristics and the creation-history of both. 3. Hence, then, the only "dispensing power" which can relax these positive injunctions and modify the force of these pronouncements, is His Who through Paul uttered them. He is Lord of His Revelation. In His sovereignty He may manifestly overrule, override, set aside, His usual, and to us peremptory, command. But the "dispensing power" should never be assumed by man, and very assured credentials should be presented by the "*woman suffered to teach.*" [So conservative a man as John Wesley, *e.g.*, wrote to a Mrs. Crosby, who had been led into a modified public activity: "I think the strength of the cause rests . . . on your having an extraordinary call. . . . It is plain to me that the whole work of God termed Methodism is an extraordinary dispensation of His providence. Therefore I do not wonder if several things occur therein which do not fall under ordinary rules of discipline. St. Paul's ordinary rule was: 'I permit not a woman to speak in the congregation.' Yet, in extraordinary cases, he made a few exceptions; at Corinth in particular." (For this he offers no proof. See xi. 5.) *Works*, xii. 339, Anno 1771.]

II. **What the Gospel did for woman.**

—Every woman who sits by her husband "*in the Church*" is a standing witness to its elevating, vindicating work on behalf of her sex. The Mahometan woman practically never goes to public worship at all. In ancient and modern synagogues of Judaism the Jewess is always present indeed, but in the women's galley, and takes no open part in the worship. [She is not permitted to adapt to her sex, as in other cases, the thanksgiving: "I thank Thee who hast made me a man." For her it must be: "I thank Thee who hast made me according to Thy will."] Woman is prominent enough in religious ceremonial and worship in some well-known Asiatic and even in African forms of idolatry. But it is matter of common knowledge that outside Christendom, even at its most nearly nominal, woman has no such position as is the natural and necessary consequence of the teaching of the New Testament. She is at man's side in the home, an equal sharer of its responsibilities, its happiness, its honours. Chivalry caught the inspiration of its Ideal of Womanhood—confined in practice as this often was to women of gentle birth—from the Church. The Gospel began by declaring that in the new, the Christian, form of the Abrahamic covenant (Gal. iii. 15-18) the woman had an equal *status* before God. In contradistinction to the old practice of Judaism, the woman was baptized as the men were. [That she might have her share thus publicly acknowledged and ratified was a reason, subsidiary but real, for the change in the sign and seal of the covenant.] She drew near to God with equal right of approach through Christ. Every woman in the Churches of Corinth, or Rome, or Ephesus, or elsewhere, knew by many daily proofs that the Gospel of Christ was on her side. See how Luke notes, "*with the women*" (Acts i. 14); their equal presence in the prayer of the upper room was a revolutionary novelty. Let the prohibition of these verses be as stern as it may, and be pressed as absolutely as it may, it is a very small abatement from a freedom such as never was hers until the Gospel became the Great Charter of womanhood and its rights. Let her be prohibited most absolutely from eating the—not always pleasant—"fruit" of the office of public teacher, yet she dwells in an assured possession and enjoyment of a garden of happiness and of abundant "fruit," such as never was nor is hers until the Gospel of Christ has borne its message and done its work. Women owe much to the Gospel.

III. **It has opened to them many forms of activity.**—1. It may well be questioned whether Rom. xvi. 1 calls Phœbe a "*deaconess*" in any precise or quasi-official sense. Almost certainly not; the date is too early. In the Pastoral Epistles there is more appearance of a definite "order," that of "*widows.*" Pliny's letter to Trajan speaks of some "*ministræ*" whom he had put to the question. Lucian's keen wit is directed against some aged Christian women who carried food to their co-religionists in prison. Organised, systematic work for the poor was very early part of the duty of the deaconess. Rom. xvi. is a very early documentary evidence of the many-sided activities of Christian women. They could "labour," and "labour much"; they could "succour" Paul and "many besides," and "bestow much labour" on him. Priscilla, equally with her husband, could risk her life—"lay down her neck"—to save Paul's life. All the martyrologies of the Churches give evidence of the noble share the women took in the work of witnessing for Christ even to death. 2. It is manifest in how many ways the woman is better adapted than man for much work which needs doing to-day at home and abroad. There is much work for women—"rescue work," for example—which women can do best. The woman's heart and sympathetic nature often give her a power over degraded men which men can never wield. The children are naturally the woman's care, and, more than even

woman herself, does the child owe much to the Gospel of that Christ Who was once the Babe of Bethlehem. Temperance work lies as fitly to their hand as it lies near to the heart of many of the noblest of the sex. "It is little grief to the Christian woman that she is excluded from the great offices in the Church, since it is hers to exercise the most glorious and effectual of all ministries," that of love (Pressensé, *Life and Practice*, 73). Woman has her primacy in the Church in all works of charity and beneficence. 3. The Spirit of "prophecy" made no distinction of sex. Pentecost began to fulfil Joel's word in a point which perhaps even Peter hardly appreciated as he quoted it [Acts ii. 17, 18 (Joel ii. 28-32)]; the "daughters" should prophesy as well as the "sons"; the very "handmaidens" [*i.e.* be it noted, the female slaves; station should matter as little as sex] should share with the "servants" the outpouring of the Spirit. If xi. 5 stood alone, it might be unfair to make it evidence of anything more than that some Corinthian women were actually "prophesying" and "praying" in the assembly, and that Paul for the moment expresses no opinion as to the right or wrong of the practice, but passes on to the immediately urgent matter that they were doing it with unveiled heads. But he says here, "*Ye may* all *prophesy*," which, coupled with the equal treatment accorded to women by the endowing Spirit, seems still further to narrow his absolute prohibition, to "teaching" (1 Tim. ii. 12), an office which once at least he distinguishes from "prophesying" (Eph. iv. 11; cf. Acts xiii. 1). As was said above, the extraordinary *charism* was above ordinary prudential regulations; the Spirit is sovereign. Very early in the Church, accordingly, we find the deaconess occasionally "in apt and holy speech" teaching the women who were preparing for baptism. (Quoted in Pressensé, *Life and Practice*, 72, note.) The "apt" speech can hardly be forbidden to exercise itself amongst women in almost every possible or needful way, whether in the cottage-meeting handful, or the [cottage-meeting handfuls aggregated into the great] "congregation." The line of division between the public "speaking in the Church" which is forbidden, and the "Bible lesson" given by a lady to a class of big lads or men in a Sunday school, which everybody sanctions, becomes a very fine one, and is indeed nearly at the vanishing-point. If it do not altogether disappear, it is manifestly rather retained, and, by Apostolic authority, absolutely retained, lest the sex should be unsexed, and because also of a primacy of man which is part of the original and abiding order of the God "not *of confusion, but of*" order and "*peace.*" As always, the "*commandment of God*" has the woman's interest at heart. It is for her sex's sake. [John Wesley may again be quoted as typical of a Scriptural conservatism and caution in dealing with this matter. He is writing two years earlier, to the same correspondent as above: "I advise you, as I did Grace Walton formerly, 1. Pray in private or public, as much as you can; 2. Even in public, you may properly enough intermix short exhortations with prayer, but keep as far from what is called preaching as you can: Therefore, never take a text; never speak in a continued discourse, without some break, about four or five minutes" (*Works*, xiii. 339).] There are also traces in the early Church of a distinct duty laid upon the "widows" to keep up a perpetual intercession on behalf of the active, busy, younger Church. The prayer meeting is a field for a grand activity for woman which none will rebuke. Her testimony in a meeting for witness-bearing or praise is help which must not be refused; nor should she withhold it, if, as part of her consecration of herself to Christ, she may, by doing violence to her temperament and her modest reticence, honour Him, or may help seeking or battling and oppressed souls, in telling "how great things the Lord hath done for" her. [Note how Christ would not

allow the woman with "the issue" to steal away in silence with her blessing, but will have her testimony borne, there in the street, before all the crowd (Luke viii. 45-47).] Women who often enter into the Holy of Holies of the "spirit," and there commune with God, are not idlers in the Church.

IV. **The one reserved thing is "teaching."**—[Woman has never publicly given the bread and the wine of the Supper. There is no masculine "priestism" in this, however, or in the restraining of the woman from the office of the public teacher.] "But they are often better qualified to teach than the man who stands up to teach them." Perhaps, but such "hard cases" make "bad law." The salutary, seemly, general, binding rule gives the man the conduct of the worship in the congregation, [and, as shown in the Homiletic Analysis, the "worship" includes the teaching and the Supper].

## *APPENDED NOTE.*

"*The Amen*" *of ver.* 16. From Stanley.—"After the prayers," says Justin (*Apol.*, c. 65, 67), "bread is offered, and wine and water, and the president offers up according to his power prayers and thanksgivings at once, and the people shout the Amen. . . . The president offers praise and glory to the Father of all, and through the name of His Son and of the Holy Spirit, and at length returns thanks to God for having vouchsafed us to partake of these things. When he has finished the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present shout, saying, 'Amen,' which is the Hebrew for 'So be it.'" The "Amen" thus used was borrowed from the worship of the synagogue, and hence probably the article is prefixed as to a well-known form. It was there regarded as the necessary ratification of the prayer or blessing (cf. 2 Cor. i. 20). . . . Compare the use of the word as uttered by the vast assembly of pilgrims at Mecca, to express their assent to the great sermon at the Kaaba (Burton's *Pilgrimage*, iii. 314).

# CHAPTER XV.

## *CRITICAL NOTES.*

Note: 1. The main teaching of chapter is *almost pure dogma.* It is for the most part matter of simple revelation and belief. 2. The *earliest* extant *written account* of the appearances of the Risen Lord. The earliest Gospel is not so early as this. This account written not more than thirty years after the asserted Resurrection of Christ. [Important in its bearing upon ver. 6.]

Ver. 1. **I declare.**—With *some* shade of *reproach* that they required it. See the same phrase, xii. 3; 2 Cor. viii. 1; Eph. vi. 21; Col. iv. 7; 2 Pet. i. 16. 1. Note, Christ's resurrection is an integral part of "*the Gospel*"; which is here both the historical facts, and the good news founded upon, rooted in, the facts. (Cf. Gal. i. 6-9.) 2. Note the cumulative "*also, also, also.*" *Q.d.* "You have as great a stake in the matter of its falsehood or truth as I have. True, I preached it; but so did you accept it, and it is your basis of life." 3. Note "*which . . . in which . . . by* (means of) *which.*" (Cf. "we stand" in Rom. v. 2, xi. 20.)

Ver. 2.—Note the punctuation and supplied words of the R.V. **Ye are** (being) **saved.**—Continuously; *present part.*, as usual. **In what word.**—Literally; so then "*the word of the Cross*" (i. 18) includes much more than merely the Crucifixion; there would be no Atonement without a Resurrection. **In vain.**—Choose between (1) R.V. margin, and (2) "so as to end after all in no saving result" (Gal. iii. 4, iv. 11). (1) would imply a *baseless* belief; (2) a *fruitless* belief. (For the thought of (2) Heb. ii. 11.) Evans prefers "rashly, without due reflection."

Ver. 3. **I received, . . . I delivered. . . . Ye received** (ver. 1).—Three first links in tradition. *A typical preacher:* (1) A witness; of (2) what he heard at first-hand and himself had seen; (3) not creator of message; it is objective, not subjective. **First of all.**—Not (1) in order of time in the history of his preaching at Corinth, nor (2) in the order of doctrine in their Christian instruction, but (3) as of first-rate importance. **Died . . . buried . . . rose.**—These are all included in the "word of The Cross" (i. 18). **For our sins.**—Evidently, then, the vicarious character of the death of Christ must not be made to rest, in (say) 2 Cor. v. 15, upon the mere lexical force of the preposition; it is abundantly to be gathered from the sense of (say) John xi. 50. See other prepositions in Rom. iv. 25; Gal. i. 4; 1 Pet. iii. 18. **According**

**to the Scriptures.**—*E.g.* Isa. liii. 5, 8; (Dan. ix. 26); Ps. xxii.; Zech. xii. 10; the Paschal Lamb. See how authoritatively the Risen Lord put His disciples into this Christian way of reading the Old Testament (Luke xxiv. 25-27, 44-46). [Everything He did and said on that first Christian "Sunday" was carefully chosen and significant—typical—carrying a large principle with it.] So before His death (Luke xxii. 37). Peter, at Pentecost, at once began using this Christian method of exposition; N.B., *at Pentecost*, another day which carried ruling precedents with it (Acts ii. 25-31). [Peter kept to this principle (1 Pet. i. 11, ii. 24). As to New Testament in Old Testament, cf. also Acts viii. 35, xiii. 33-35, xvii. 3, xxvi. 22, 23; John ii. 22, xx. 9.] "These words carry us back to a time when the events of Christianity required not only to be illustrated or confirmed, but to be *justified* by reference to Judaism" (Stanley).

Ver. 4. **Buried.**—Not an unimportant link in the chain of Christian evidences. Looks, moreover, like a touch of the oral detail with which the story was by the first preachers communicated. Emphasised also in each of the four Gospels. Yet did not need the emphatic clenching "*According to the Scriptures.*" "Earth sacred above all planets as the burial-place of the Redeemer" (Beecher). **Was raised.**—Not "*rose*": cf. Ps. ii. 7; Isa. lv. 3 (Hos. vi. 2); Ps. xvi. 10.

Ver. 5. **Cephas.**—The first *man* to see the Risen Christ. A very important coincidence with apparently casual words in Mark xvi. 7 (and Luke xxiv. 34, which most probably has this force). Cephas too ["Cephas," as they said at Corinth] was an authority at Corinth; an *ad homines* touch, this. **Twelve.**—Already "officially" equivalent to "the Apostolic college"; in fact *ten* (Luke, as above), and then *eleven* (John xx. 26).

Ver. 6. **Five hundred . . . at once.**—Probably in Matt. xxviii. 16 (perhaps confirmed by John xxi. 1). The one hundred and twenty of Acts i. were only those in Jerusalem. Paul's word, so obviously open to challenge, and, if false or mistaken, to refutation, is authority for this fact. [Not to insist upon his inspiration.] The omission of this in the Gospels agrees with John xx. 30. **Fallen asleep.**—(Ver. 18; cf. vii. 39, xi. 30.) After the death of Christ, dying is never in the New Testament called "*death*," in connection with Christians. Was the phrase born of the words of Christ, Matt. ix. 24? "The Church never dies or thinks of death, though she buries her dead" (Pope). **Remain.**—John xxi. 22, 23; 1 Thess. iv. 15.

Ver. 7. **James.**—Unrecorded. The James of Acts xv., and of the Epistle. Tradition (in "Gospel of the Hebrews") that (from Matt. xxvi. 29) James (unbelieving in John vii. 5) had vowed neither to eat, from the Last Supper onward, until he had seen the Risen Lord. Jesus appeared to Him. "Bring a table and bread. My brother, eat thy bread because the Son of Man is risen from the dead." See the prominence of Cephas and James in Gal. i., ii. **All the apostles.**—Choose between John xx. 26; Matt. xxviii. 16; and Acts i. 4. [Evans would emphasise "*apostles*" rather than "*all.*"]

Ver. 8. **Due time.**—Rather lay stress on the physical inferiority of the abortive-born than upon the comparative *time* of birth. [Paul was born long *after* time, not *before* time.] Stanley gives Suet., *Octavius*, xxxv. 2, as authority for magistrates appointed irregularly being called *abortivi*. **To me.**—A necessary credential to put him on equality with Cephas and the rest. See ix. 1; Acts ix. 17 (where Ananias is presumably reporting what he has learned from Christ Himself), xxvi. 16 (read in connection with Gal. i. 16, which must not be forced into mechanically restricted coincidence with this "*appearance*" alone). **Last of** (them) **all.**

Ver. 9.—"I am nothing;" ver. 10, "I am greater than any of them." Cf. another Pharisee (Luke xviii. 10).

Ver. 10. **In vain.**—Cf. 2 Cor. vi. 1. [Like the stony-ground, or thorny-ground, hearers.] Cf. also Eph. iii. 8; 1 Tim. i. 12-16.

Ver. 12.—Cf. the strain of 1 Thess. iv. 14, or Rom. viii. 11. Also see that it is "*Christ*" [and not first of all facts about Him] who is the burden and substance of the preaching. Cf. 2 Cor. iv. 5, "We preach Christ Jesus, as Lord." Perhaps "denying" a resurrection in fact, whilst claiming still to "believe in it" in the (non-natural) sense of 2 Tim. ii. 18. [Epicureans were practically Materialists; Stoics taught (a *Nirvana*-like or Pantheist) return of the individual into the Great, Central Being. So they laughed with polite contempt at Athens. "A new god and goddess: Jesus and Anastasis" (Acts xvii. 18). Common people believed that death was either extinction of the soul or a worthless shadow life, and this most likely the form of disbelief which would be prevalent in the Church at Corinth. (After all, in this, as in many similar cases, the philosophers only state more explicitly what common people with native shrewdness feel. *E.g.* the difficulties raised in ver. 35 are recurrent perpetually amongst plain people who never heard of even the names of the philosophers.) Very important to notice in this discussion how the resurrection of the body is made to stand or fall with the after-life of the man. As in Mark xii. 18 *sqq.* Christ enlarges the scope of the discussion from one merely concerning the resurrection, to an argument for the immortality of the man in covenant with God, and hence for his body also, as an integral part of his redeemed and covenanted manhood.]

Ver. 12.—"*If one, then all.*"

Ver. 13.—"*All, or none at all.*"

Ver. 14.—Not this time "*vain*" through any fault or failure on their part, but because the very basis of faith and life has been an unreality.

Ver. 15.—"We were chosen to be His witnesses of this very fact (Acts x. 41, ii. 32, iii. 15, xiii. 31); it would turn out that we were *God's false witnesses!*" **Of God** (second time) is "as to God, and what He has done."

Ver. 18. **In Christ.**—As Rev. xiv. 13; 1 Thess. iv. 16. [*But not* ver. 14, which is "*through* Jesus," rendering the connection more probable "will God bring through Jesus with Him" (viz. Jesus).]

Ver. 19.—Do not connect "*hoped in Christ.*" [Cf. for this, 1 John iii. 3 (no longer ambiguous in R.V.). Yet see Eph. i. 12.] Our whole life is "in Christ"; our "*hope*" is the hope of men who are "*in Christ.*" **Miserable.**—In the old sense (cf. "miserable sinners" in the Anglican Liturgy) "to be pitied, or compassionated, unhappy that we are!"

Ver. 20. **Hath.**—Emphasis here, not on "*now*" or "*Christ.*" Over against their doubts, and speculations, and "impossibilities," Paul sets the one conclusive *fact*. **Firstfruits.**—Read in the light of Rom. xi. 16; Jas. i. 18; Rev. xiv. 4; Matt. xxvii. 52, 53. With a variant figure the thought is in Col. i. 18; Rev. i. 5.

Vers 20-23. **By man . . . by man.**—Resurrection actually comes "by man"; we may almost say *must* so come, and so He became man. He the Judge also because "the Son of Man" (John v. 27). **All . . . All.**—How wide is the second "*all*"? Is the verse to read, (1) "*All* (*men*) . . . (*we believers*) *all*"? Not exegetically very natural. Is it (2) "(*We believers*) *all* . . . (*we believers*) *all*"? True; but the first member of the sentence is narrower than the fact, and scarcely worthy of the race-wide view here taken of the two Adams and their connected "posterities." Urged, from Augustine downwards, that Paul's argument throughout has only those "*in Christ*" in view [true]; that the Resurrection existence of these out of Him is never called "*life*" [true]; also that ver. 23 limits the argument to believers. The Greek fathers [Ellicott] read ver. 22 of *physical* quickening, and make the verse, (3) "*All* (*men*) . . . *all* (*men*)"; and bring in the limitation of the scope at ver. 23. [One obvious qualification of "*all die*" is found in 1 Thess. iv. 17.] ["The great resurrection chapter is, as it were, an expansion of the Lord's own word, '*Because I live, ye shall live also*'" (Pope).] See Homiletic Analysis. The *resurrection of the unsaved* is asserted, on the highest authority, in John v. 28, 29.

Ver. 23. **Order.**—Quite another detail as to "order" in the Resurrection is revealed in 1 Thess. iv 16, 17: "*first . . . then.*" Order here is "*troop.*" The race defiles before us, an army in three divisions: First Division—The Lord (Heb. xii. 2); Second Division—The Church of the Redeemed, some following Him already nearly two millenniums in the rear; Third Division—The rest of mankind (Evans). **At His coming.**—Note the (exegetical) comma. See Appended Note.

Ver. 24. **The end.**—Derived perhaps from Christ's words, reported in Matt. xxiv. 13. "What [this] may signify cannot be determined; *alii alia;* in all likelihood 'the end' is its own [and only] interpreter." So, wisely, Evans, who adds, with most: "It seems probable that the *kingship* will be handed over by the Incarnate Son to Him who is God and Father; but the kingdom of His own founding, in its contents of citizens, . . . Phil. iii. 10, will continue; so that '*His kingdom shall have no end*' (Dan. vii. 13, 14)." "The only expression about which there may reasonably be some doubt is *kingdom*. That it is more inclusive than the 'regnum *gratiæ*' in its ordinary acceptance, and that it may have some reference to the millennial kingdom, is probably to be inferred from the wide horizon of this holy revelation. This kingdom the Eternal Son . . . delivers up to the Eternal Father, not as though He were Himself thereby divested of the kingdom, but as a sharer in it for evermore." (Ellicott.) "*Then,*" viz. "*when,* . . . (or, again) *when.*" *All the consecrated words re* the Second Advent are found in 2 Thess. i. 7, ii. 18: Parousia, Epiphany, Apocalypse. **The kingdom.**—Rev. xix. 15, 16. **Put down.**—R.V., "*abolished,*" as in 2 Tim. i. 10 (A.V.). "Not total destruction, but absolute subjugation." Favourite word of Paul's; nine times in this Epistle, with various shades of the one meaning: "to reduce to such practical unimportance, or non-importance, that it may be left out of the account altogether." **Rule, authority, power.**—Abstract, for personal concretes, as in Eph. i. 25, iii. 10, vi. 13; Col. i. 16; Rom. viii. 38. **He.**—Viz. Christ.

Ver. 25. **He . . . He.**—*Christ . . . the Father* (ver. 27, end).

Ver. 26.—Observe *the present tense* of a dateless event that is, as it were, seen to be happening.

Ver. 27.—Combine in exposition Ps. ii. 6-9; Ps. viii. 6; (Heb. ii. 8); Ps. cx. 1.; (Heb. i. 13); Matt. xxii. 44; Acts ii. 34, 35; (Ps. xlv. 6). Observe the R.V. margin, "*shall have said,*"—a solemn announcement to the listening world, *by God Himself,* parallel to that of Ps. ii. 7, 8, the "*decree*" of the Son's investiture with His mediatorial royalty.

Ver. 28. **All in all.**—Cf. Col. iii. 11, an anticipatory, suggestive fulfilment of the idea.

Ver. 29.—Very obscure to us; obviously well known to, and understood by, the Corinthians. An *ad homines* argument entirely. *Q.d.* "You deny or question the resurrection; I take you, then, on the ground of your own practice: why, then, do you baptize?" etc. There is some patristic tradition, but of uncertain value even to the Fathers who report it, of a practice of baptizing a "representative" of a man who, as yet only a catechumen, had died without baptism, lest he should for want of it be lost. [Some say putting the living man under the bed, and letting him give answers to the usual questions, addressed to the corpse!] A question is raised whether this very expression of Paul's did not in some cases occasion such a practice. [Certainly *no fair homiletic use* is to be made of these words in any sense of appealing to the survivors in a Church to come forward and seek a new baptism of the Spirit, that they may fill the place, and do the work, of some who have died.]

Ver. 30.—Another *ad hominem* (or *ab homine*) argument, but this time of abiding, real value. **We.**—Primarily the apostles (2 Cor. i. 8-10, iv. 10, etc.); but all Christians, sooner or later, had a taste of peril.

Ver. 31. **Your rejoicing.**—As R.V. text. *Q.d.* "I say emphatically, brethren—and to you of whom I so constantly make my boast, should I be likely to say anything but what is the simple fact? *You* will believe me—I die daily."

Ver. 32. **After the manner of men.**—*I.e.* "With no better hopes or prospect of the future, than 'natural' men, and men without even the Gospel revelation, have when they endure risk, and face conflict and danger." *The converse case* is put in ver. 58, "*Wherefore*," *i.e.* "Seeing you have such hopes," etc. **Fought with beasts.**—Cf. the unrecorded, perhaps identical, peril of 2 Cor. i. 8. *All one word* in Greek; no specialising of literal "*beasts*," such as the English suggests: "I was like a beast-fighting gladiator in an amphitheatre." [Precisely similar idealising of the fact in Ps. xxii. 11-13. Also, Ignatius writes of his guards ("leopards," he calls them): "All the way from Syria to Rome (on his way to martyrdom) did I beast-fight by land and sea."] Observe the varying connection by punctuation in A.V. and R.V.; either good, A.V. better. Quotation from Isa. xxii. 13, of Jerusalem profligacy when Sennacherib was at hand.

Ver. 33.—Perhaps the fall into immorality in the Church at Corinth had been facilitated by a weakened faith in the Resurrection.

Ver. 34. "**Arouse yourselves,**" as if from the sleep after the orgies of Isa. xxii. 13, "and show yourselves, and bear yourselves, *righteously*." Well expounded by 1 Thess. v. 2-8. "*I speak this, in order to your shaming.*" (So vi. 5.)

Ver. 35.—(1) Emphasis on "*the dead*,—the DEAD!—the DEAD!" (2) "*With what* (kind of) *body?*" See Homiletic Analysis.

Ver. 36.—Emphasis on "*thou*" (so R.V.); answers (1). (John xii. 24.)

Ver. 37.—(2) is answered in vers. 37-54. **Not the body that shall be.**—*I.e.*, as the argument requires, *quâ* its physical constitution; "*not the* (kind of) *body that*," etc. **Bare.**—*I.e.* "*naked*"; "a grain not yet clothed with that body that shall be" (Ellicott), 2 Cor. v. 3; "the resurrection body shall be *clothed* with glory" (Evans).

Ver. 38.—"The Apostle . . . uses the argument of analogy, not to solve what he leaves a mystery, but to obviate objection. The present world furnishes abundant analogies, but no resemblances of the future resurrection. Nothing in the buried flesh germinates as the life in a seed-corn; the new life is a direct creation. '*God giveth*,' etc. Not that the disembodied spirit will form for itself a new vehicle, but that in the resurrection the spirit will have a spiritual—psychical—organism given to it, which in the wonder of Divine power will be to it the same organ it had in time." (Pope, *Compend. of Theol.*, iii. 408.) "*A body of its own* (kind);" query, any more than this, here?

Ver. 39.—There is room, then, for another kind of body than that which makes the difficulty of ver. 35.

Ver. 40.—Nothing to do in this verse with the astronomical "celestial bodies." See Homiletic Analysis (Whole Chapter).

Ver. 41.—Here, indeed, these come in, but only for a comparison in point of "*glory*," not of physical constitution.

Ver. 42. **So.**—Wide diversity between old and new, boundless possibilities of variety, in kind and in degree of glory. **It.**—Must not be made too emphatic, so as to carry the weight of the Identity of the body. The *nearest* to a *nominative* to the verb is "*the resurrection*" (ver. 42).

Ver. 43. **Dishonour.**—"Funeral pomp is but a mask hiding the truth that the body carried to the grave has lost the rights of humanity. Instead of the kind attentions rendered to it a few days ago, it is left alone in the dark and silent grave, as the meanest living body would not be." (Beet.) **In power.**—All "bodily" faculties intensified, perhaps with new faculties added.

Ver. 44. **Natural . . . spiritual.**—As throughout, *e.g.*, chap. ii. *If there is* a body for the πνεῦμα, as in fact there is, then the presumption is also that there will be a body for the ψυχή. A body in both cases adapted (1) to its *tenant*, and (2) to its world and environment; and further—

Ver. 45.—Congruous with (1) The living *soul*, Adam, and (2) the life-giving *spirit*, the Last [*not* the Second] Adam (Gen. ii. 7; John v. 21, vi. 63, xi. 25, xiv. 6). Distinguish between the Old Testament historic quotation here and the New Testament prophetic supplement.

Ver. 46.—A principle, perhaps as broad as creation, holding good in, *e.g.*, ver. 47.

Ver. 47.—Note the true reading (R.V.). **Of heaven.**—As in the Litany: "O God the Father, of heaven," where notice the comma.

Ver. 48.—"*The earthy* (Adam, or man); *the heavenly* (Adam, or man)." (*Sing. masc.*)

Ver. 49.—Rom. viii. 29; Phil. iii. 21; 1 John iii. 2; 2 Cor. iii. 18, iv. 11. Notice the margin (R.V.), but prefer the text. Paul is not dealing with *ethics*, but with *physiology* (Evans).

Ver. 50. **This.**—Viz. what follows. **Flesh and blood.**—Cf. "flesh and bone," Luke xxiv. 39 (but very little beyond the historical fact can safely be made out from that verse). **Doth not.**—*Present* tense, another (cf. ver. 46) broad, general principle, fixed and enduring, as true morally as physically.

Ver. 51. **Tell,** rather than "*show*." **A mystery.**—A fact hitherto kept a secret, but not necessarily inapprehensible when, as now in this case, it is disclosed.

Ver. 52.—"By a process not like the slow corruption and decay of death, but sudden, rapid, Divine" (Stanley). "In the midst of this world's busy life, and without any previous warning, Christ will lay His hand upon the wheels of time, and they will stop at once and for ever" (Beet). **Trumpet.**—Cf. Exod. xix. 16; Ps. xlvii. 5; Zech. ix. 14; Isa. xxvii. 13. Also 1 Thess. iv. 16; Matt. xxiv. 31 (Rev. viii.-xi.), (Stanley). Or, perhaps, "*He shall sound the trumpet.*"

Ver. 53. **Put on.**—2 Cor. v. 4. Isa. xxv. 8 quoted.

Ver. 55.—Hosea xiii. 14 quoted, or, more correctly, forms the mental starting-point of an (imitated) outburst of triumph. Hosea suggests, Paul sees (as it were) in prophetic prevision, a day of deliverance of the race from the power of death and Hades.

Ver. 56.—As Rom. v. 12-21 is a parallel in the experimental life to vers. 12-19 and vers. 45-49 in the physical, so Rom. vii. 7, viii. 4 is expository of this ver. 56. [N.B.—This the earlier-written passage.] **Sting.**—Same word as *goad* (Acts [ix. 5] xxvi. 14).

Ver. 58.—Observe "*vain*" again, and how "*in the Lord*" ["in Christ"] runs through the chapter. ["We look, not as theorists, but as believers, for a future life" (Isaac Taylor).]

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.*

The **whole chapter** may be reviewed as *An Easter Bible Reading on* 1 *Cor. xv.*

I. **A piece of history.**
II. **A piece of revelation.**
III. **A piece of exhortation.**

I. **History.**—1. Keen-witted Corinthians fond of speculation. Too "wise" (2 Ep. xi. 19, etc.) to take any doctrine simply on trust, even from most thoroughly accredited teacher. They must *understand* the Resurrection. They must get it into a form that could be *understood*. If that not the original form, or "orthodox," so much the worse for the original. "Yes; we understand 'the Resurrection.' There is no mystery about it. In fact, in the only true sense, it is 'past already' (probably, as 2 Tim. ii. 18). Merely a rhetorical expression for the experience of the New Birth. We all have had our Resurrection—all the Resurrection we ever shall have. There is in the literal, physical sense no resurrection of the dead."

2. This the exaggeration of a glorious truth. The new, eternal life did begin at "conversion." That was *the* event, *the* date, of all others in our history; the real dividing-line was there, between Old and New, between Death and Life. There is a dividing-line at death and another at the resurrection. But these are only between newer and newer stages of the new life. In death the body drops away; the full Life, in which the parting of the spiritual nature from its old companion of many years is a mere momentary incident, goes on to become fuller and larger. At the resurrection it will go on from fuller to fullest. But we did rise out of Death into Life at conversion. Corinthians so far held truth, but exaggerated it.

3. They did not do justice to the place of the body in the Man. It is as essentially part of him as the spirit or the soul. Man is not soul only, any more

than he is body only. He is body, soul, spirit; these three are one man. By the Redeemer's grace the body has its future. He died for *the whole* manhood; the body therefore is to have its redemption and after-life.

4. "*Cannot have!*" these said; "*cannot be!* How are the dead—the *Dead!*—the **Dead!** Look at them; think of them after a month's interment! The DEAD! don't you see them?—raised up? With what (sort of a) body do these dead come (forth)?" "Well," replies Paul, "you must not say 'Cannot be.' *It has been.*" [So neither has a modern scientist or unbeliever any right to sweep away miracle with a preliminary and all-excluding flourish of denials. Have miracles been? It is not speculation or theory, but evidence and history, which come first in the discussion.] "Deny all resurrection of the dead, and you fight against History. History will win; and, meanwhile, remember that if there cannot be a resurrection of the body, then your Lord lies still in death in Joseph's grave—or at least is only so alive as any other ordinary departed friend or teacher is. No Resurrection? Then there is no Risen Lord!"

5. *Christianity is historical.* Its doctrines are rooted in facts of history. The Incarnation is bound up with—stands or falls with—the historical fact that Jesus Christ was born by the Holy Ghost of a pure Virgin. If Jesus Christ did not actually, historically die on a certain day [in probably April, A.D. 30] there has been no Atonement. If He did so die, but did not actually rise again on the following Sunday morning, and a few weeks after return to heaven and take His place in that world once more, then the death was nothing to the purpose of an Atonement, and there is no living, incarnate Representative of humanity to be its Intercessor with God. If assailants can do anything, they can disprove "facts" alleged, or show the "evidence" for them valueless. If the facts are gone, or not verifiable and as good as gone, Christianity is really as good as gone—Salvation is gone. Prove that the Resurrection of Christ is not history,—that is their task; then His death is vain, "*your faith vain*" too.

6. *But the history has all the verification possible*—not to speak of the prophetic intimations of it—and that very strong. "The eleven saw Him. Peter saw Him. I saw Him. 'Hallucination? Enthusiasm?' Five hundred saw Him at once. A crowd does not all see visions, nor do all see the same visions. All that is subjective is eliminated by the multiplication of the witnesses. The larger half, more than two hundred and fifty at least, are alive; you can examine them. 'Fraud?' You do not get five hundred, or two hundred and fifty, conspirators all to keep the secret of a fraud, or not for long." If any fact of ancient history can be established by sober testimony, this can. Christ's resurrection is a **Piece** of **History**, the sure historical foundation of our faith and hope. "*Now* **is** *Christ* **risen** *from the dead!* And become the firstfruits of them that slept." But this last truth, further, is—

II. **A piece of revelation.**—1. *Of this, at present, we can only say we believe it.* The fact is *mere* revelation; unascertainable by us beforehand; and now that it is asserted, we can barely do more than tell what the words mean. We can hardly conceive what the fact may prove to be in the historical working out and fulfilment. There is to be a resurrection of All (see Critical Notes); an ordered, orderly gathering of all Christ's then living and raised ones. Christ has already, as the firstfruits of the harvest for the heavenly garner, led the way. "At His Coming." "The End."

2. *The relations, even of time, between these revealed facts of the future are involved in great obscurity.* The interpretation of what is here said in connection with "the End" is full of mystery. But the symbolic language gives an impressive picture. We see heaven's Crown Prince, the Colleague in the Father's throne, to Whom has been apportioned the government of our redeemed race, and the task of bringing this rebel world into subjection by the

power of His cross, or by the arm of His might. There He stands. His task is finished. He stands Victor over the last Enemy to be destroyed; His foot is upon Death! His fellow-conquerors stand with Him in triumphant array, in their risen bodies, fashioned like His. Then (may we say it?) He lowers His sword, and bends His head, and bows His knee, and gives back to the Father the kingdom—the Mediator's kingdom—which was committed to Him long ago, in the morning of His own resurrection (Ps. ii.; Rom. xiv. 9, etc.). What a history that of redemption has been! What a history that of His kingdom! And that is "the end" of it!

3. *But those bodies of His fellow-conquerors?* "How are the Dead raised? **How** raised? How **raised**? Where do they get a body? [For they cannot be *men* without a body; a mere unclothed human spirit is not a man.] What kind of body have they found given them?" How? Revelation does not help us much. But at least (1) "Death is *per se* no barrier. In nature the seed which yourselves sow *must die* if it is to live again. Death is, for it, the way to life. 'God gives it a body;' for the present that is the best answer. And so God is pledged to clothe the immaterial in man." (2) "With what kind of body? Do not know; and what matter? Even now, amongst these material, fleshly enwrappings of the Life-principle, animal, aviar, piscine, there is infinite variety, suggesting infinite possibilities of new kinds. There may easily be another kind of a body for a risen man. These are all "*flesh*," in their infinite varieties, *as his may be* in its kind; and all are real bodies. All glory, again, is glory, but with differences; sun, moon, star as compared with star, varying in kind as well as degree, of glory. That we cannot conceive of so new, so novel, a condition and glory of the body does not carry us very far in the direction of disbelief, nor hinder faith very much. We do not understand, we can hardly conceive of, the real, material, angelic "bodies celestial." If there are Jovians, or Saturnians, or Mercurials in yonder planets, what are Jovian, Saturnian, Martial "celestial bodies" like? As was said (ii. 14), between the "natural" and the "spiritual" is a great gulf, in fact and knowledge. The "natural" body can give very scanty suggestion as to the "spiritual" body. This will be "my own" (kind of) "body," and "God gives it me"; a body which makes me—the "spiritual man" who used to wear a "natural" body—even in body a "spiritual" man complete, redeemed in *body*, soul, spirit. My life repeats the old order of history: first the "natural" Adam, the earth-born; next the "spiritual," life-giving Adam, the Lord, heaven-born. "Flesh and blood inherit the kingdom of God?" Of course not. If that be your difficulty, we are agreed. I also say "Flesh and blood cannot." "This corruptible?" No, no! **Incorruption**. "This mortal?" No! **Immortality**. "This weakness and frailty and liability to suffering?" Away with the thought! Thank God, No! We shall have done with these. I do not know much, but I know, "**raised in power**," in all the light and strength and glory of an eternal Life. I do not know how; it has not been told me how. All is **Revelation**; even that does not go far.

III. **Exhortation.**—*Does the belief in the resurrection matter so much?* Cannot a man be "steadfast, unmovable," and the rest, without it? The holding of the doctrine involves: 1. Without it the man's creed is no longer *Christian*. And the connection between creed and life is close. In the discussion in this chapter it is assumed that the question is not merely one of the Resurrection and future of the Body, but of the future and immortality of the Man. And if in the man's creed Immortality be not found, it will affect his life, sooner or later, radically. At all events, to disbelieve the doctrine is to disbelieve the resurrection of Christ, with all the serious issues connected therewith. "And why do you baptize for the dead?" 2. "Then are we of all men the most miserable!" Die like the brutes,

and yet be doomed to live without their *insouciance*, their freedom from responsibility and from fear of the future, from the sting of conscience and the sense and shame of failure? Sacrifice the pleasure—such as it is—of the men to whom this life is all, and afterwards find that we have no more to hope for than they? "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Why risk everything—anything at all—for Christ? Why "fight with beasts at Ephesus," or "die daily," if it be only "after the manner of men"—with ordinary men's hopes and no more? 3. "**Do not listen** *to such things*, lest you come to think such things!" "*Evil communications corrupt good manners.*" We shall suffer hurt in even mental contact with such teaching. 4. "**Do not listen; labour; abound in the work.**" Work is the best antidote to [sinful desires and to] vain speculations. An idle life leaves open the door to temptation, to unbelief, or to a sensuous or sensual life—perhaps to both. A Christian may be too busy to doubt; never too busy to enjoy and love and live. 5. "You are **in the Lord**; your hope is that of men '*in Him*' (ver. 19); your activities are His, wrought through you. Can His life and work be in vain, ending unworthily, or in a complete failure?" If He had no resurrection, His own work was in vain; if you have none, yours will be. But stand fast in your faith in His resurrection and your own. (Many of these points, and some omitted ones, fully stated in Separate Homilies.) "Take the objective facts away from Christianity," you lose the "definiteness and outward reality," the more "strong and definite service." You get "endless and useless introspection upon the mysteries of our nature, the rehearsal of which comes to be regarded as the fulfilment of righteousness,"—"a very tiresome thing, and so dropped, or exchanged for . . . Atheism." (See Munger, *Freedom of Faith*, p. 195.)

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 1—11.

*Paul and the Gospel.*

I. **Paul himself.**—1. *The evangelist.*—Note this: (1) He is preaching the Gospel whilst he is teaching such many-sided facts as these of our paragraph, and whilst rising to such an exalted strain of prophecy as follows in the chapter. He is "**the Prophet Paul.**" He claims in 1 Thess. iv. 15 to speak "in the word of the Lord," like a prophet of the old dispensation (cf., *e.g.*, 1 Kings xx. 35, 36). In this very chapter he soon leaves behind him Old Testament Scripture and Contemporary Testimony, and soars away to a height and into a glory of Revelation as to the future, where our eye can scarcely see anything distinctly for very brightness, and where we hear his words indeed, but can hardly interpret some of them. Yet he never ceases to be practical. The lark at her highest flight, and lost in a blaze of glory where her song is indistinct for very distance, belongs to earth. Paul's sudden, swift return to theology in vers. 56, 57, and to the practical, prosaic round of daily duty and service in ver. 58, is very like her sudden drop to her nest, and to her motherly duty to her young ones, when her song is done. None of these exalted themes are revealed merely for the sake of giving, even accurate, information about the future. What is revealed is for the sake of its bearing upon practical life; so much only is revealed as may serve this purpose. [(*a*) "What is that to thee? Follow thou Me" (John xxi. 22). (*b*) "Are there few that be saved?" "Enter ye in at the strait gate," *i.e.* "Few or many, see that you make one" (Luke xiii. 23). (*c*) "Lord, who did sin, this man or his parents? . . . *We* must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day" (John ix. 2, 4). (*d*) *These may illustrate a Bible reading on* 2 Tim. ii. 23.] (2) All this sheds useful light on his words in ii. 2: "Christ, and Him crucified," is no narrow theme. "The Cross" touches everything in the history of a fallen, redeemed race. But "the Cross" here includes the

Resurrection. "*So we preached,*" when he came to Corinth. No scorn should be poured on the Evangelical preachers of the Georgian Revival that with them it was all "the Cross," "the blood." These themes were greatly prominent; the men were physicians for souls, who had found by observation and comparison of many thousands of "cases," of all types, ages, ranks, what was *the* mischief of the human heart, and, by as wide experiment, what form of presentation of the truth, and what particular detail of the whole round of Truth, best cured their "sick." Certainly results justified them. But they did not, in point of fact, confine themselves so literally to the Cross. They quite understood, "saved by His life" (Rom. v. 10), and preached the Resurrection and the high-priestly Intercession as the necessary complements of Calvary. A "Gospel" preacher will roam far and wide in the field of revealed knowledge; he will explore in many directions, but he will always start from the Cross; he will account himself to have lost his bearings when he can no longer see it; he will account himself "lost" when he has wandered so far that the Cross has sunk beneath his mental horizon; he will keep open, however far afield, his communications with this Sacred Base of operations. Every theme will be traced up to, and treated as it is related to, the Cross and its atonement; subject to that condition, every theme of Revelation and its suggestions is open to him. Such themes as the Resurrection of the Lord, of the saints, of the sinner; the victory of the Lord over all opposing evil; the mysterious "End";—so dealt with, these are all part of "the Gospel." His prime qualification is that he is—

2. *Paul the witness.*—(1) To have seen Christ Jesus as the *Risen* Lord was a necessary credential of apostleship, in the narrowest sense of that title. It made Paul, perhaps, rather than Matthias (Acts i. 26), the twelfth of these patriarchs of the new Israel. [The Benjamite was the youngest-born, the Benjamin, amongst them.] Peter may have been too forward [Pentecost had not yet given the fulness of the Spirit] in choosing the man, but at least he was right as to the requisite credential: "One must be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection." The Resurrection gives an adequate account of the origin of the Christian Church; thus actually to have seen Christ gives an adequate account of the transformation of Saul into Paul; taking all the circumstances of the case into the reckoning, nothing else does. To see the glorious Form, and to hear the voice of Jesus of Nazareth speaking as from heaven to him, years after He had been accounted dead, buried, and finally disposed of, like any other dead man,—this was a fact which at one blow brought down in ruins all the creed and all the personal righteousness of Saul of Tarsus. "These Nazarenes, then, whom I have been imprisoning because they said that the Crucified One was living again, and even bringing to the death when I could not get them to apostatise,—*they were right; I have been wrong.* My orthodox Judaism has no room for this fact; I must needs recast it. And who is He Whom I have despised, hated, calling *Him* a 'blasphemer,' who deserved to be crucified? I have been mistaken. I have been the blasphemer. I am the sinner—chief of sinners!" The one fact revolutionised Paul's life. [No man's life is ever the same, he cannot himself be again the same, when once he has intelligently, distinctly, come face to face with the Risen Christ and His claims. The meeting may lead to salvation; it may intensify rebellion: but life can never after be the same.] He also would have been the most earnest in saying that his capacity to be a witness to the Resurrection was no mere eyewitness capacity for testifying to a bare historical fact, however important and however far-reaching in its consequences. He knows of a belief in and a confession of a Risen Christ which only coexists with, which indeed is, salvation (Rom. x. 9, 10). The aim of his personal life is to have a knowledge, which is a sharing, of the resurrection of his Lord (Phil. iii. 10, 11). The Christian apologist of to-day, rightly enough,

only appeals to the eyewitnesses of the historic fact; but Paul would have made the appeal of his "testimony" to lie here,—not that, so many years ago, God revealed His (risen) Son *to* him—a fact to grow more and more dim, perhaps, as it receded into the perspective of the past, and to become every year more and more a memory, open to challenge and to critical doubt as to its validity,—but that God, then and ever after, "revealed His (risen) Son *in* him" (Gal. i. 16); the historical fact became an experienced one; the objective having a subjective which was its counterpart, and its continuously new verification. (2) Still, here Paul is the historic witness, "*delivering what*" he has "*first received.*" For apologetic or evidential purposes, the "simpler" the witness, so he be manifestly honest, the stronger the evidence he gives. The man who has evidently no *arrière pensée*, who in all transparent directness does nothing but repeat what he knows at first-hand, is the best purveyor of facts for a verdict. Paul, like his brother apostles, was "put in trust with the Gospel" (1 Thess. ii. 4); they were simply "stewards of the mysteries," not creators or proprietors (iv. 1); it is "a deposit" (2 Tim. i. 14); as with every true preacher, there is with him no "feigning these things out of his own mind." [He had, moreover, "*received*" it just as the Corinthians had received it in their turn from him. In them it had been a "*believing*" which made them, who were once "without strength," to "*stand*," and had "*saved*" them.] The old argument is of perpetual force, that the very inartificiality of the Gospel accounts of the Resurrection, the very "discrepancies" which testify to independence and to absence of collusive design, are guarantees of the truthfulness of the witnesses, and so inferentially to the truth of their story. [So, again, the only effective preacher of the Gospel is one who "*delivers what*" he has "*received.*" Hence his knowledge of the facts and of the dogmas depending upon them, here passes over into his personal character. He is—]

3. *Paul the sinner saved.*—(1) How diverse his tone: in ver. 9 he labours, he accumulates language of depreciation, to make out that he is **nothing** before God and in comparison with the rest of the Apostolic company; in ver. 10 he boldly claims equality with the best of men, and to be **more than they all.** "Is that honest and consistent with Christian sincerity? Particularly, is it true when he says '*least of all*' [and 'chief of sinners']? (1 Tim. i. 15). Would you not rather call him chief of apostles, chief of saints?" Natural questions. Yet all he says is true. [2 Cor. ii. 17 should apply most strictly to a man's statement of his Christian experience, particularly to his relation of his ante-conversion experience. There is no use, and no honour done to God, in forgetting, or undervaluing, or denying, the good wrought in a man by the Spirit of God, even before by regeneration he became definitely a Christian.] For "*I persecuted the Church of God.*" (*a*) Sin once committed, not even God can undo it. Pardon of the past cannot alter the past. It may be forgiven, but it abides a fact. Paul did stand by, "consenting," when Stephen was stoned, as certainly as he did study in the school of Gamaliel. The veil of Divine mercy may "cover" the sin, but the thing is there Sins fade from our memory, or the remembrance may lose its poignancy by time [it evidently did not with Paul]; God's anger on account of them is turned away, from the moment that the sinner trusts in Christ; from that moment there is no hell to fear on their account: but they are there. The prodigal sits forgiven and happy at his father's table, but the riot of a far country is a fact and the inheritance is wasted. The bankrupt gets his order of discharge, but his debts are facts nevertheless. And he owes them still. Legally they no longer concern him; he is "justified" from them. He may prosper, and his new gains are safe; but he is in debt still. The law and the favour of his creditors make him safe; but an honest man feels that morally and in fact he is a debtor still. So Paul, the chief apostle, is God's debtor still. In

the moment fixed precisely for his readers in Phil. iii. 7, a line was graciously drawn across the record of his life; nothing beyond it would again come up to his condemnation. But the line was drawn by grace, by mere favour for the sake of Another. The persecutor might and did build high in holy attainment, but the foundation was an act of favour, grace, and only grace. "*By the grace of God I am*," etc., is as continuously true of his *standing* before God as of his abundant and fruitful life-activity. In himself and his own *status*, this chief apostle is "*not meet to be called an apostle, because*," etc. The guilt of his persecution is not now upon him; he is being sanctified from his love of sin; it has no dominion over him, we may well believe; he is pardoned, rejoicing, God-honoured, holy. But there is the fact, unalterable to all eternity,—"*I persecuted.*" And the remembrance of all this will make such words as ver. 9 always natural and always true. (*b*) How does that father [*e.g. John Tregenoweth: His Mark*, M. G. Pearse] in after-years look upon that child whom years ago he injured or blinded in the utter ignorance of deep intoxication? How does that man look upon his friend, when he finds that in an hour of passion, though in perfect good faith [the good faith of a madman], he said and did what proves to have been utterly false and to have done a lifelong wrong to his friend, at least with some who have not come, or will not, to know his friend as he now knows him? How does he feel, who in the dark has struck his very brother, supposing the while that he was resisting an enemy? With all the energy of a grand native capacity and all the force of intense conviction, Paul had flung himself against ["fallen upon" (Matt. xxi. 44)] his Brother, his Best Friend, the Redeemer of his soul, his Divine Messiah. True he "did it ignorantly," but he did it. Oh, the horror of it! Oh, the shame of it! Oh, the wrong, the sin, of it! "Chief of sinners!" "*Least of the apostles! Not worthy to be called an apostle!*" *The words are natural, honest, true.* All this, then, being remembered, he is free to say—(2) "*More than they all.*" But "*by the grace of God.*" [Some poor, wretched, lost souls on earth have to say, and in hell will have to say eternally, "*In spite of* the grace of God, I am what I am!" Men may "receive the grace of God in vain," making it to end in no such saving result as it was designed to accomplish. There are some lives of which one has to say, reversing Rom. v. 20, "Where grace abounded, sin did much more abound." In many senses true, "What maketh heaven, that maketh hell." Paul is a "good steward of the grace of God" (1 Pet. iv. 10).] He is not here thinking only or principally of his standing with God, but of himself as measured by what he has been able to accomplish for his Master's work. Not merely "by the favour of God"; "grace" seldom means so little as that in the New Testament. It is rather the actual power which has quickened and enlightened the mind, and energised the will, and aroused the devotion of the heart; a power and force which, when pursued to its last analysis, is revealed as the indwelling, personal Spirit of God. [John Hunt, one of the early missionaries to the Fiji islands, desiring to impress this practical interchangeableness of the thoughts, "grace" and "Holy Spirit," in a preliminary and confessedly tentative rendering of some of the Epistles into the Bau dialect, several times deliberately translated "grace" by "Holy Spirit" (told to H. J. F. by Hunt's colleague, R. B. Lyth).] (3) The meaning and practical value of such self-assertion as is here found in Paul's letters, is dealt with in many other places of these Epistles, particularly chap. ix. and 2 Cor. x. *sqq.* It is never the gratuitous parading of himself which is natural to the *vain* man, who cannot be happy unless he is the centre of attention; nor the masterful self-assertion of the consciously strong man. It is always forced upon him by others (2 Cor. xii. 11, "Ye have compelled me"); it is forced out from him by others. It is here a question of safeguarding and vindicating an Apostolic *status* and consequent authority, whose primary purpose and main worth were the service

of the Churches and the "edification" of the Corinthians themselves (2 Cor. x. 8). And, moreover, with the more reason, that he found his action in declining the maintenance by the Church which other teachers accepted, was misconstrued into a confession of conscious inferiority of *status*. A Christian man cannot be too utterly humble as before God; his sense of abundant and entire indebtedness to the grace of God for all he is, and for all he has been able to accomplish, cannot be kept too keen. After every new success [and at every new "failure"] he will do wisely to present himself before God, with fullest acknowledgment that in it all he is only the *organon* of the Spirit of God. [There are two moments when Self is very near and when self-centering thought is a very real peril to the spiritual life; the moment of "*more abundant*" success, and the moment of more abundant failure.] Comparison with his fellow-workers is a dangerous occupation of thought for any man, and, as here, needs instantly and constantly guarding with the fullest acknowledgment, "*Yet not I, but . . . God.*" [Cf. another, "Yet not I, but," etc. (Gal. ii. 20), where the thought is substantially unaffected by the important *various reading*.] It will be the rarest occupation of his meditation, and still more rarely will such words of self-assertion come to his lips. The facts of his life and work best speak for him. Yet, like Paul, he may thankfully appear before his Master,—like the servant in the Parable of the Pounds [not, of course, the Talents, the structure and teaching of which illustrate a distinctly different point],—whose pound has gained ten pounds, whilst the same original "capital" in the case of his fellow-servants has only produced five or none (Luke xix. 16-20); and may remember how greater native capacity and more abundant work have co-operated with the grace of God, to give him a real pre-eminence in toil and fruit. And he may bear himself amongst his fellows as one in whom the grace of God has found a conspicuous and instructive example of what it can do in human nature. But all for the glory of God, and for the advancement of the work committed to his hands.

We have also in this paragraph:—

II. **An early account of "the Gospel"** as, 1. *Resting on facts*; 2. *Rooted in Old Testament Scripture*; 3. *Received by faith.*

1. *Resting on facts.*—(1) If any facts of ancient history can be attested at all, such main outlines at the least of the Gospel story as are given here may be. Naturally such facts, particularly that of Christ's resurrection from a real death, need more evidence than do facts against which no presumption arises from their being unlike those of ordinary experience. "Need," for producing conviction in ordinary minds; for one "proof," if it were irrefragable and gave demonstration, may establish a certainty; anything beyond simply *facilitates* belief, by eliminating the chances of error which may lurk behind a single proof, and by giving the (not simply *added*, but) multiple certainty of convergent proofs, and by reducing to a *minimum* the force of any preliminary presumption against. When a writer says, "Early Christianity was, in all its essentials, a special development of the common religious ideas of Asia Minor and Syria. It was the creed of Adonis, the creed of Attis, dressed up afresh and applied with minor differences to a certain historical or mythical personage, said to have lived in Galilee about the beginning of the Christian era. Of this personage himself we know really nothing but the name or names; every supposed fact or incident related of him is merely one of the common and universal incidents related of all the other gods" (Grant Allen, *Fortnightly Review*, September 1893),—he is not only asserting what few responsible historical students would affirm, but is displaying a scepticism which would make any certainty about all ancient history, or about any facts not actually within a man's direct personal knowledge, impossible. Historical evidence is probable evidence; but sufficient testimony may make

probability practical certainty. (2) These verses are a piece of documentary evidence acknowledged on all hands to be of the highest value. There is no important disbelief that they are part of a letter of a man practically a contemporary of the events he chronicles, writing not more than twenty-eight or thirty years after the date assumed for them. They are of a good class of testimony; epistolary, incidentally stated, not formally proved; asserted to be accepted by the readers of the letters as well as by the writer; and that, moreover, by readers many of whom were at most not favourably disposed towards the writer, whilst some of them would have been glad to discredit anything he was or said; especially when also he is here using what he claims to be their belief, to rebuke and refute what he asserts to be their inexcusable, unreasonable, mischievous error. The fact of a resurrection of a dead Christ is not one hard to be brought to the test; it is not easy, or a thing easily credible as an explanatory theory, to mistake for a Divine man risen from the dead in full vigour and glory a crucified sufferer, never really dead, reviving from a swoon, creeping feebly out of a grave (and this especially guarded) to an obscure life where no most interested enemy ever suspected His presence, or succeeded in discovering Him. The death was officially secured and acknowledged; the burial was conducted by friends, but with the cognisance and under the *surveillance* of enemies; a real resurrection was not difficult of verification or disproof. Fraud or conscious deception on the part of the early witnesses is not now seriously alleged. (3) Very marked and warranted attention has of late been drawn to the evidence of ver. 6. Its force was long ago perceived, but it has come into prominence as meeting the suggestion of some hallucination of a woman, infecting other women, and working with a predisposition to believe [a thing entirely without evidence, and against all such evidence as is extant, whatever be its value], to make a company of disheartened men believe that, not only was Jesus risen, but that they had seen Him so risen. "*The greater part*" of five hundred simultaneous spectators and auditors of the Risen Lord remained for testimony and examination. *I.e.* not fewer than two hundred and fifty-one, and perhaps three or four hundred, persons are asserted by Paul to be still living, not later than thirty years (at the outside) after the fact in question,—a fact about which there could be little room for mistake,—and all of them most thoroughly assured that they all saw the Crucified Christ at one and the same time. The history of conspiracies does not make it likely that in this one case only there should never have been either a penitent, or a traitor, to reveal a concerted deception, if even so many could have been brought to agree to it in the first instance. One person may be under an illusion, but hardly twelve, or two hundred and fifty-one, or five hundred; and certainly no two or twelve or five hundred would be under the same illusion, and all under the same at once. The number of the simultaneous witnesses eliminates everything subjective,—predisposition, illusion, temperament, fraud. [Myths, it is also urged, take longer time to grow than did this "myth" of Christ's miracles and resurrection, which (N.B.) had plainly already "grown," some years earlier than this Corinthian date. Myth, or subjective persuasion, does not account for the *holy* character and effects of the story. A myth, or a story whose basis was a predisposition or a temperament or a mistake, does not afford adequate foundation for the Christian Church, or account for the character and the steadfastness of the first Christians, who, against all their interests, against all the tendencies of the sinful human heart, and at severe and deadly cost, persisted in their creed and succeeded in spreading it. Nor do they account for the perennial vitality of the belief age after age, or for its renewing power in all races, Churches, social ranks, ages, both sexes, etc.

2. *Rooted in Old Testament Scripture.*—(1) Christianity and its several basal facts

are never fairly judged if brought to the bar standing alone. Its most startlingly miraculous fact loses much presumptive improbability, gains some presumptive probability, if it is seen to be part of a coherent scheme of facts and doctrines, in which each lends meaning and support to every other, and which gives an adequate reason for the divergence from the "natural" order and ordinary human experience. The whole company of facts must be brought to trial in their combination. [*E.g.* on the Christian theory of the nature and work of Christ, it is not improbable that His entrance into the world should be exceptional, or that His departure from it should be exceptional; that such a person for such a purpose should work miracles, or rise from the dead. Christianity, on its own suppositions, gives an adequate reason for all the "miraculous" in it.] (2) Christianity must be read in the light of this fact amongst others, that it was preceded by a collection of books, held sacred by its Jewish opponents, of which it claims to be the continuation, the expansion, the complement, the fulfilment (Heb. i. 1). The very claim is noteworthy, in face of the notoriously unfriendly attitude of Judaism to Christianity from the very first; let the reasons for making such a claim be considered. However to be accounted for, the fact remains that the Old Testament from beginning to end contains many things, many passages, which exhibit a wonderful coincidence with, and suitableness to, the history and the Christian account of the work of Christ. The Founder of Christianity Himself put His followers upon the track of discovery of such correspondences. (See Critical Notes.) Christianity and the Resurrection of its Christ are no isolated facts, sprung full-grown into a void place in the history of religions. The theory of the creation of a Christ by His followers out of presuppositions and expectations gathered from their reading of the Old Testament, disregards the only available or colourable historic evidence, that their reading and training in the Old Testament led them, as it led their Jewish enemies, into quite another line of conception and expectation of the Christ. Old Testament and New Testament are two parts of one Revelation. The Mosaic system is not the main stream of the Old Testament. It "came in" by the way; "it was added" for a special purpose (Rom. v. 20; Gal. iii. 19); it flows alongside of the main stream. It is abundantly rich in teaching about Christ and the Gospel, the very arrangements of the Tabernacle being an object lesson in Divine truth (Heb. ix. 8, 11). But "*the Scriptures*" are larger than "*the Law*," and some are older, or contain a record of an older revelation, than "*the Law*." Christ, and the Resurrection which sets the seal of completeness upon His redeeming work, are the fulfilment of, not the hope of Israel only, but of man. In Christ are the pledge and the contents of a covenant as old as Abraham (Gal. iii. 14, 16, 29). Christ is a new Adam, over against the first Adam. The importance of rooting the new Gospel thus firmly in the Old Testament Scriptures lay in this, that it was not Israelite only in its scope and redemption grace, but wide as mankind. And amongst its cogent "evidences" is this, that it fulfils previsions, predictions, promises, hopes, put on record long before—fulfils them where only One Mind, the Divine, could have arranged the coincidences, the correspondences, the paired anticipations and realisations (see Appended Note).

3. *Received by faith.*—"*Ye believed;*" "*unless ye believed in vain.*" How vital was the connection between the truth of the history and their personal Christian life will be seen subsequently in the chapter (vers. 12-19). But it is there discussed with regard rather to the theory of the Christian life. Practically the connection is very close. John often connects faith in the Incarnation with regeneration (1 Ep. iv. 15, v. 5, 10-12, etc.). Paul himself very closely connects salvation with faith in the Resurrection of Christ [Rom. x. 9; observe also how this is rooted in Old Testament Scripture, Deut. xxx. 14]. The Lord and Teacher of both had connected "eternal life" with "knowing the Only True God"

(John xvii. 3). In fact, no doctrine is believed in until it has become a truth into which living experience has admitted a man. He may indeed fall away, fearfully, from such knowledge as is even thus gained (Heb. x. 26, vi. 4-6). But it is a remote possibility. The people of Christ are "sanctified by the truth." They have within themselves a Faith deeper than a mere Creed, however intelligently accepted and held. Without being a theologian a man may be a believer, and one also who can give a good account of his "*faith.*" A new environment, where unbelief is customary; a crop of difficulties and objections, not known or appreciated earlier; above all, a moral deterioration; may sever the merely "orthodox man" from his creed. The believer "*stands*" by his faith; it gives him *status* before God—his only *status*; it brings him a real strength in which he "*stands*" against trial, persecution, doubt. The martyrs were drawn from this class of believers. They died for truths which had become part of their very selves, for truths which had made them what they were. [Might it be said by way of illustration, that the merely orthodox man, like the *crustacean*, carries his skeleton and shield and strength outside him, and so can easily "cast" it, as the crustaceans do; whilst the believer has his supporting, strengthening "truth" within, where *vertebrates* have their skeleton? The skeleton within the man is belief; the skeleton outside the man is orthodoxy.]

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 12—19.

1. "Does death end all?" Well, answer another question: "Did His death end all?" A popular illustrated edition of Renan's *Vie de Jésus* has, as its last page, inserted even after the "*Fin*," which closes the text, a woodcut of the Crucified. It is simply and only a crucified peasant, one before whose cross a man might pass with half-contemptuous pity, and cry in modern slang, "Poor beggar! *Pauvre diable!*" He is alone as he hangs in the picture; not even the raven of the classical quotation is yet wheeling around the gibbet; the sky behind is cloudy and angry; the head hangs slouched in death's relaxation; the hair is the uncombed, matted mass of a wretched peasant who for twenty-four hours has been in the hands of enemies. The title of the picture might have been "*Fin*" too. The realistic page, the execution of a Jewish fanatic, is the last in Renan's book. When He says, "It is finished," Renan thinks it is finished too. The *Vie de Jésus* goes no further. Forsaken, a failure, finished,—so He hangs in the illustration. If that were all, if the life of Jesus did end there, what a difference! But is that the end of the story of the Incarnate Son? No. His life did not begin at Bethlehem; nor did it finish at Calvary. Yet such talk as was rife at Corinth, at least in some quarters, could only have one logical consequence, viz. that it did there finish, that Christ, like any other dear or great name of the past, is nothing but a memory. 2. Doubtless a good deal of such talk was the informal, loose, "liberal," "intellectual" theologising on this particular topic, of which the first and last and only specimen was by no means that in Corinth. Some caught up, parrot-fashion, the current novelty of their circle: "No intelligent man, you know, believes in any resurrection of literally dead men. Nobody, you know, denies the Resurrection. Oh no; but of course it is agreed that nothing was ever meant but a moral rising again. 'Awake to righteousness,' for example." Or a superficial, natural sharpness, in danger of making that native shrewdness which so generally proves right in common things, the arbiter of judgment in every sort of case which comes under its review, pronounces off-hand: "Cannot be, you know! The dead rise again? The *dead*? Why, look at them! Is not that enough?" (ver. 35). Or another of these exceedingly clever, reasonable people, with great

wisdom propounds their pet difficulty: "Well, you see, our point is here. We cannot see where they are to get a body. What sort of body is conceivable for them? No, no; such a doctrine cannot pass muster with us." Human nature is the same in all ages and Churches and lands. It likes to pose as the philosopher; it likes to be amongst the people "not quite so easily satisfied as some folks, you know!" And there may have been some in their hearts really half afraid of the doctrine; hardly caring to face the thought of having some day to confront in a restored life the past and its account. 3. By-and-by (ver. 36 *sqq.*) Paul deals fully with the objections raised by such "sharp," "'cute" people, rather vain of their wisdom, and of their emancipation from old and foolish beliefs. Here he drives home at their Christianity. He gives them credit for being sincerely Christian, so far as they understood it. In ver. 36 he is bitingly satirical: "Yes, you are exceedingly clever, no doubt, to perceive such difficulties. But you are really fools, with all your wisdom." Here he takes the most favourable estimate: They do really care to be Christians; they do really prize their Christian hope; they would be distressed, he is willing to believe, if all ended in vanity and mocking emptiness. Then let them look where they are being led, before they commit themselves to such rash pronouncements. Are they prepared to go all the length of the path into which, with such a light heart and confident, they have begun to enter? 4. "*No resurrection of dead persons*" at all? Then take a choice; read the alternative in two directions: "All, or none at all." All, or no risen Christ! (vers. 13, 16). "One and all." A risen Christ, and therefore all! If no risen Christ, then all distinctively "Christian" preaching is folly (ver. 14), or falsehood (ver. 15), whether intentionally so or not. To recast, reconstruct, the Christian scheme, so as to leave out a Risen Christ, is to produce what is not Christianity at all. For what underlies this elimination of His rising again in the proposed scheme of doctrine? Naturalism; which presumes always against the breaking-in of the supernatural, and even the exceptional, upon the natural and ordinary in the world's course. ["Are we then, by assuming this one event, to abandon the entire modern view of the world?" (A. Schweizer, quoted by Delitzsch). "So soon as I can convince myself of the reality of the resurrection of Christ, this absolute miracle, as Paul seems to declare it, I shatter the modern conception of the word. This breach in the order of nature, which I regard as inviolable, would be an irreparable breach in my system, in my whole world of thought" (H. Lang, *apud* Delitzsch, *Expositor*, January 1889).] And that is no "Christianity" which is not full of God's present-day, active, wise, loving operativeness in His world, especially as incessantly "elaborating" its Redemption by His Son, Christ. As well, moreover, delete the Cross as the Resurrection, and hope to call the expurgated story the story of Christ. It may be an imitation of the story; like some clever historical novels, making use of known facts, and keeping in many parts fairly parallel with them. But though it may borrow the name, and try to pass as "a Gospel," though with differences; it is a "*different* Gospel"; *another* there cannot be (Gal. i. 6, 7). The old "*preaching is vain*," if this be true. A vexatiously restrictive code of ethics is left, without adequate motive or power, and encumbered with a good deal else besides the Resurrection which is "top-hamper," some day to be thrown overboard to lighten the ship. 5. Nor has it only theological consequences. The practical consequences are many and serious. Faith in good testimony is seriously shaken (ver. 15); but of more consequence is it that Faith has been groping after, laying hold of, a shadow, a memory, a name, a vanished Christ. There may have been an offering of the Lamb of God on Calvary, but we have no token by which to differentiate that death from any other crucifixion. The offering may have been accepted, but we have no evidence of the fact. Behind

the veil there is for a guilty soul no real, living, interceding High Priest drawing near to God with its burden of "*sins*" (ver. 17). Long ago that "High Priest's" body was left to corrupt in its new grave in a garden near Jerusalem. Jesus is no more than the Lazarus now finally dead; He is only living as Paul is still living. The death on the cross may then well have been only the abortive end, unfortunately premature, of a life which might have done much more for its generation if it had been longer spared. But everything distinctive of the Christian hope, everything of a real Atonement on which a guilty conscience may stay itself, is gone. Christ is one of the world's great names—perhaps the greatest. But "*in Christ*"? As well say "*in Paul*"? 6. "*In Christ.*" It is a restricted life. It has its joys and its compensations, whatever its value, or truth, or falsehood. But it has its restrictions, its sacrifices, its self-denial; it goes entirely against the "grain" of human nature; it entails heavy penalties, social and other. And if, after all, its eternal compensation is a delusion; if, above all, the guilty soul must pass into eternity without a Saviour and an Atonement, left eternally "in the lurch," "made ashamed by our hope" (Rom. v. 5); then Christians have lived in a fool's paradise, and made a fool's bargain. In the arena as they are, before a gazing world (iv. 9), they may well expect the laughter of the spectators, unless indeed these accord them pity. They are of "*all men most pitiable.*" "Nos *perituri* salutamus." [And this is not much mitigated, if—seeing that the argument of the chapter assumes that no resurrection means no after-life at all, and so no judgment or (perhaps) hell—it be the earthly bargain of which account is alone taken by Paul.]

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 20—34.

*The Divine Goal of Creation History.*

I. **Contrasts.**—This section divides at ver. 29. In the one half and in the other we are at two levels, in two worlds. [Cf. Raphael's "Transfiguration," where literal truth is sacrificed to the higher truth of the nearness and close relation between the upper, mountain-top world of calm, light, heaven, glory, and the lower world of scoffing Pharisees, bewildered disciples, and demon-possessed humanity.] In vers. 20-28 we are amongst the most sublime disclosures of all the Christian Scriptures—disclosures which with their very excess of glory almost cease to *disclose* anything. They are sublime almost to being obscure. The horizon is so bright, and the facts are so far away and so low down towards it, that we can scarcely make out anything. We hear such words as ver. 28; we repeat the words; but we can scarcely do more than let our hearts ponder, and reverently and soberly imagine; we can make nothing precise. Paul is borne up and along in soaring flights of confident strength, where we can hardly follow, even with our eyes. On the other hand, in vers. 29-34, we are on a very earthly level indeed. There is mystery here, but only such as wraps around an obscure, superstitious practice of a few half-Christianised Corinthians. The rest is plain enough! A Paul in the midst of men who are like the very "*beasts*" of the amphitheatre. Corinthians sinking into a drunken sleep of unrighteousness, from which he seeks to "*awaken*" them to "*righteousness*," or, at the least, to "*shame.*" [Such revelations to be first given to the world in a letter to such "Christians"! "Kind to the unthankful and to the evil" indeed (Luke vi. 35).] So near, also, are the two worlds always. The evil closely enfolds the holy. Or is it the holy which enfolds the evil? The salt is—just where it is wanted—in the midst of what but for it would be corruption. We live in both worlds. In the seclusion of the mountain-top sometimes; oftener at the mountain-foot amongst the enemies and the demons, or in the

arena amongst the beasts. Happy if the memories of the upper level are our strength down on the lower. Happy if such truths as are in vers. 20-28 may keep our souls from the infection of "*evil communications*," or from the "*sleep*" of the intoxication of scepticism or sin. So, again, are the two worlds near together, the two levels not very remote, in the inner life of the soul. Glorious revelations; miserable superstitions. Soaring hopes of victories; battles for very life with the "beast" within our nature. Standing by the side of our Lord, with our foot placed where His has first been, on the neck of some foe of our soul's Life; sinking into the perilous, criminal sloth or torpor induced by an atmosphere of "*evil communications*." And thus we knit together the two ends of the paragraph. "*Now* is *Christ risen*." Spite of all the theorisers and speculators and keen creators of "insuperable" difficulties, the fact is sure. Paul stands by the slothful, sleeping, drunken-souled Corinthians, and shouts his cry into the drowsy ear: "*Christ is risen!* Do *ye* arise; awake; shake off your sleep; arouse yourselves and be righteous! Righteous! Why you are past shaming. You have not the knowledge of God." *I.e.* they are back again in, and of, the "world which knew not God" (i. 21). If Regeneration was an upward development, there has now been Degeneration; these men who "knew God" were only a variation wrought and sustained by Grace. They have now sinned against grace; in them nature has "reverted to type." "You have not the knowledge of God." [Observe the close connection between unrighteousness and the loss of the knowledge of God. Cf. Rom. i. 18, 19, 20-23.]

II. **Christ.**—Like the Russians and Greeks on Easter morning, Paul is ready to go up and down, saying with a holy cheerfulness of salutation to every fellow-Christian, "Brother, now is Christ risen!" This is a perpetual Easter-morning age for the Church of the Risen Christ. Every Christian may look every other in the face with the glad cry, "*He* is risen." *But why should not He be simply treated as an isolated case?* Why should we not believe in His rising, whilst disbelieving or doubting any other, or our own?

1. *Because He is another "Adam."*—The race is not made up of aggregated units. There is a *solidarity* in the history and fortunes of mankind. Contrast the angels. So far as we know, they are each one an independent creation; probably they have been contemporaries in age from the first; each living a natural life complete within itself, dependent only upon God. But any one generation of mankind owes life to the preceding, and these to another preceding them, and so on till "Adam" [= Adam + Eve] is reached. The angels are an aggregate of individuals only. Each might stand or fall alone. The human race is a unity; it is a tree, where branch springs out of branch in periodic succession. [It is a Vine, a wild vine.] The old theologians called this a *federal* principle. There is a law of dealing with great Unities in God's administration of His rule over our race. "Abraham" means for some purposes Abraham and his descendants; "Christ" means Christ and His people; Adam stood for himself and mankind. And so the authorised, official, inspired, "prophetic" exposition of history here given makes it clear that the human race may be summarised in two "Adams." Or, to change the aspect of the truth, without affecting its substance, there are two Mankinds, each with its Adam, each with its close-knit unity and continuity of life, each with its *solidarity* of history and fortunes. But the link which forms the unity is in the one case a physical derivation and succession, in the other a spiritual unity and succession. [A real sense in which the Christians of any one age are the descendants of, and owe their life to, those of the next, and all, preceding.] The first, dying Adam involved a race of natural descendants in his death—in all its senses. The Risen Adam includes in His resurrection victory another race in whom His Spirit is the link of continuous, corporate life, quickening even their "mortal bodies." No

man stands or falls alone; isolation, independence, is not the "law" of the history of Humanity. The Christ did not die or rise alone; that is not the law of the new Humanity, of which he is the new "Adam." To change the figure again,

2. *Because He is the Firstfruits of the harvest of rising humanity.*—"*Sown*" through long ages, in all nooks and corners of earth's field. The field is full of its human seed. The seed is waiting for the touch of the Eternal Spring-tide. The call of Spring yearly awakens sleeping Nature into bud, and flower, and fruit, and harvest. That other Spring shall come with a "*trumpet*" call,—

["Tuba mirum spargens sonum,
Per sepulchra regionum"],—

and every buried seed shall start forth into perfect and eternally mature life. The "*firstfruits*" says that there is a harvest behind; it *promises* a harvest; it *pledges* a harvest; it "*samples*" the following harvest; the offering of the first-fruits *consecrates* the coming harvest. [As in another application, the firstfruits of the week, the Sunday, is no quittance paid to God that then we may claim and use the six remaining for ourselves, as if our own. The firstfruits of the week thus given to Him acknowledge that all the days are His, all to be spent as He will approve, whilst He lends us six and keeps only one exclusively for Himself.]

3. *Captain of a host.*—(1) Heb. ii. 10 [which is in closest connection with the quotation here given of Ps. viii. 6] makes the "perfection" of our "Captain" to lie just here, that He is not isolated as He leads the host, but has been partaker with them of "flesh and blood" and "sufferings." Else would they who follow look forward "where their Chief precedes them" with a feeling that the Captain knew nothing of the life of the common soldier, that He alone of all the great "sacramental host" had never known the fighting and the "roughing" of their lot. Here the "partaking" looks forward into the future. The great host defiles in glorious resurrection review; each company and rank passes in its "*order*" before the throne of God. (See the review illustration followed somewhat further in the Homiletic Analysis of whole chapter.) (2) If no resurrection, it has been seen (vers. 16-19) that, hoping to be *partakers with Christ*, we wake up to find ourselves *partakers of nothing*! No. "*Now is Christ risen*," and we are partakers of His victory. Our resurrection is part of our victory. We rise, that so in that fact the finishing stroke may be given to the dominion of death over our redeemed human nature. A mortal body was the last fetter of death, the last token of our sometime bondage. We rise, that so the last fetter may be stricken off. No part of our nature, spirit, soul, *body*, that is not delivered It is part of His victory. We now dare, every one of us, to put our foot on the neck of Goliath, when our David has first brought him down, and planted His victorious foot upon our foe and His. This particular victory is part of a larger victory, by which is regained a lost lordship belonging to mankind. In Ps. viii. 6 the opened eye of the prophet sees into the heart of things—into the inner secret of the order of Creation as it existed in the mind of the Creator. The geological history of the earth leads up to an earth fitted to be man's home. A palæontological history can be made out, whether it be an ideal sequence only, or an historical and physical one, leading up to man. And when the home was ready, and the tenant was ready, the investiture of occupancy ran, "Let them have dominion," etc. (Gen. i. 8). Thus he who was the goal of all the earliest history, the climax (and indeed the summation) of all the series of animate creaturely structures, the crown of creation, was also its King. [Perhaps also its High Priest, voicing the praise, the thanksgiving, the prayers, of the mute, unintelligent creation, which found in Him a brain and a heart and a voice.] Yet even this royalty is not the thought of God in its

furthest reach. We speak of ascending from this to a higher. Yet it would be the truer order to work backwards and downwards, from the higher to this; as God did. We ascend from the earliest creature-life to man, the ruler of all; nor do we stop there, but go forward and upward to the Son of Man. But though we reverently so shape our thought, God began there, began with Him. He is the mediation between God and the creature, between Spirit and Matter. He is the Link. "In Him all things were created." Man's original royalty was but the adumbration of His. As the lower creatures had shadowed Man forth, so did he shadow the Son forth. After all, he was not the last link, but the last but one, in the chain which led up from some quasi-eozoic form to the Incarnate Son. [The Gospel is Creation's order over again. "All things man's. Man is Christ's. Christ is God's."] But sin entered. Creation's course had so far gone true and straight to man; now, when it should have gone true and straight through him to God, it swerved aside and was sinfully deflected. The race "missed its mark." The race no longer rose to the Son; the Son's garment of royalty no longer descended on man. But, ever since, slowly, piecemeal, has the lost dominion, the forfeited position, been recovered by all those who are "in" the Second Adam. The first note of the recovered victory is in the Protevangelion (Gen. iii. 15); fulfilled most gloriously in the Wilderness and the Garden and at Calvary, no doubt; yet even there only anticipating the last crowning triumph of a long series of triumphs for our Captain. And with a heel sore wounded, very often does each Christian soldier step upon his foe and go on to conquer, with the heartening word ringing in his ears, "God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. xvi. 20). There is an enemy within him, whose dominion is broken [in closest connection with his Lord's resurrection once more (Rom. vi. 10, 11)]: "Sin shall not have dominion over you" (*ib.* v. 14). The very world with all its trials, difficulties, opposition, is a subject thing to them who are in the Man Who has never lost, who has more abundantly fulfilled, the Royalty of Man. "In jeopardy every hour;" "dying daily," yet "all things work together for good" to men. The world is "under their feet." [Nor need there be hesitation in seeing more than merely the relics of the original dominion, but a real mediatorially-recovered dominion, in the growing mastery wielded by man over the physical forces of the natural world, subjecting all to his daily service. Certainly in the power of Christ over even His pre-resurrection body, making it vanish from amongst His foes or walk upon the waters,—a power which was once even communicated to Peter,—we get a little opening, giving us largest views into a world of vast, dim possibilities of the power of man's spirit, itself enfranchised from the dominion of sin, over even the material world.] There is a "*last enemy*" for him, as for the race,—Death. "Death is his" (iii. 22) already; it comes to him conquered by his Captain, and made to run on his Captain's errand, and bear his Captain's summons to him to a more glorious life. He is delivered from the bondage to its fear: the fear is "*put under his feet*"; when at last he meets it, he finds that he has but to deal with a "*stingless*" serpent, on whose head he can "*put his foot*" boldly. He is meeting nothing but the Shadow of a great Name, the Shadow of a great Dread, a thing whose substantial power is "abolished," "*destroyed.*" And this detailed victory of His dying people, in succession, is part of His own (cf. Luke x. 18), which by-and-by shall be consummated in one grand public demonstration of His triumph, in the day when even the very bodies of His people have death's yoke struck off and death itself underfoot. "*All things under His feet.*"

III. **Consummation.**—What is this "end" and the subjection of even the "Son Himself"? Answer as one did who was asked, "What is heaven like?" "I will tell you when we meet there."

## HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—*Verses* 35—58.

I. **Two categories appear:—**

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| 1. *The First Adam*— | *The last Adam*— |
| The first man. | The second Man. |
| Of the earth. | From heaven. |
| Earthy. | [The Lord (but note the better text).] |
| A soul. | A spirit. |
| A living soul. | A quickening Spirit. |
| Natural. | Spiritual. |
| 2. *His race*— | |
| Bear the image of the earthy. | Bear . . . of the Heavenly. |
| Wear natural bodies. | Wear spiritual bodies. |
| 3. *Their bodies are correspondingly*— | |
| *Sown* | *Raised* |
| Corruptible. | Incorruptible. |
| Dishonoured. | Glorified [glorious]. |
| In weakness. | In power. |
| Natural [psychic]. | Spiritual. |

II. **The second of these is not inconceivable,** for 1. *Death and dissolution form no "insuperable" barrier.*—"You clever objectors—wonderfully clever!—how is it when **you** (emphatic) sow **your** seed? Are its death and dissolution an 'insuperable' barrier to the springing of the grain you hope to reap? This does not 'prove' the resurrection; but it is good enough to turn the edge of your objection. A reply as good as your difficulty. A reply just of the calibre of your thought, and of yourself."

2. "'*What kind of bodies?*' How do I know? How can I tell? Can He Himself tell me, until I wear one, and my *spirit* finds its '*spiritual body*' a vehicle congruous to its nature, flexible to its will, an instrument fitted for its every purpose? 'Cannot conceive of such a body?' What of that? If you were an intelligent fish, could you understand, think you, the body, the flesh, of a bird, or of a beast? Your experience and your imagination are not the measure of the possibilities, or even of the facts. Why not one more, one new, kind of material, where there are already so many used to make bodies? Do you really sweep the field, and know all that God can invent in variety of bodily organisations? See glory differing in kind from glory—celestial from terrestrial. See glory differing in degree from glory, as between star and star. 'Cannot conceive with what kind of body?' Perhaps the Maker of them all can, nevertheless. Better to wait and see what reserve of resource He has by Him. **Cannot conceive** does not equal **Cannot be.**"

## HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—*Verses* 50—54.

"*This corruptible,*" "*this mortal.*"—These words raise the question of *The Identity of the Resurrection Body.*

**Introduction.**—The one point which is most distinctly the peculiarity of Christian teaching as to the future state is the Resurrection of the Body. The Identity the one question perpetually interesting to the great mass of hearers and readers of Christian doctrine in regard to the Resurrection. [Some oldest creeds said expressly, "Of the Flesh." Christianity the only religion which takes serious account of the body, or does it any honour, or regards holiness as possible in connection with it.] All is pure matter of revelation. Pure question of faith: "we *believe* in the Resurrection of the Body." Now that

the truth has been announced, various natural analogies may be imagined and pressed into the service of it. But certainly they never suggested it; the chrysalis-butterfly fact, for example, barely gave an uncertain suggestion of another after-life for man, but *not for his body.* Reason never dreamed of this unaided; now that it is revealed, it puts a tax upon faith beyond what is demanded by most truths of Christianity. At the mention of it the Athenian gentlemen and scholars on Areopagus burst out laughing, and would give no serious attention to anything further.

I. **Wherein the identity consists.**—A very difficult question to determine. 1. Study *the identity of the body with which we are familiar.* Spite of all incessant and manifold physical changes, every man would say that he has "*the same body*" to-day which he had as a boy twenty, fifty, years ago. For (1) There has been *an unbroken continuity* between stage and stage of its growth and change. The successive stages have overlapped; there has been what in brickwork is called "a bonding" of the successive stages; old material has always co-existed with new. At no point has the soul's house been pulled down entirely and entirely rebuilt *de novo.* The cottage of boyhood has been altered and enlarged piecemeal into the mansion-sized house of manhood. Even if the material of the early stages has all disappeared, yet at no point has there ever been a distinctly "new house." "Same house" all along. And (2) *The home of the same tenant all along.* The organism has been in unbroken connection with the same indwelling Man. The continuous instrument of the same immaterial part. (3) *There has been a persistent form impressed upon it.* Age, disease, accident, natural decay and recuperation, incessantly going on, have made great changes in size, height, etc. Yet many early marks, whether from birth or accident, have persisted through all stages. Something has remained unaltered or merely modified, which is peculiarly the man's own. Like the man's *signature*, the body has an individuality which perhaps, like it, expresses the man. Both change as the man changes, with years, and, to some extent visibly, in character. Seen most, this last, in the face. But the man has often had from the first a gait, a carriage, which has always been his own, individual and recognisable. [(4) Analogies to these changes, and to the incessant motion and flux amongst constituent parts, whilst an identity of the whole remains unaffected, may be discovered. "New blade, new handle. Same knife?" may be trivial, and a quibble. But also: Perpetually renewed water in "*the same river.*" Constant change of the men in a regiment, by losses, retirements, recruiting, whilst the commanding officer remains the same, and in command of "*the same regiment.*" (Also the regimental "life" is continuous; the traditions, and the *esprit de corps*, keep up the regimental identity.) "The same Board," "the same Body of trustees," empowered to fill up vacancies in their number as they occur, till at last none of the original members remain.]

II. **Considerations which require an identity of some kind.**—1. *The whole man is redeemed.* The body is an integral, indispensable part of manhood. A man is not made up of Soul and Spirit, to which the body is merely one of a number of vestments,—"coats,"—natural or artificial; it is not a mere accident of our earthly state. The Redeemer of Man wore, and took with Him into glory, an entire Humanity, its body with the rest. The body has its future, because it has its place in the redemption. It is the lowliest part of the threefold human nature; it waits longest for, and will receive last, its share in the glory secured for redeemed manhood in the eternal world; but it has its claim upon the Redeemer. On the body was set the Abrahamic form of the seal of that covenant between Jehovah and His "friend," which is the surest basis of hope for Abraham's immortality (Matt. xxii. 31, 32, and ‖s). [There is a physical reception by the body of the seals and signs of the new, the Gospel, form of the

same covenant and its contents of grace; the body is baptized with the physical element of water, it eats and drinks of a real supper of bread and wine.] The resurrection of an "identic body" is a necessary part of the greater fact of the resurrection and after-life of the whole man. To "raise" the same immaterial part and to provide it with a new body, would not be the restoration of the same man, the same person, after the dissolution wrought by death and the grave.

2. *Christ's identic resurrection body.*—The great, palpable, popular stumbling-block and difficulty is no doubt the physical, chemical dissolution of the corpse into its primary elements, which again enter into new combinations in other organic structures. Christ's body "saw no corruption." The process which had set in, in the purely natural order, with His friend Lazarus, or with David (Acts ii. 29-31), was not permitted to begin. He brought out of Joseph's tomb a body which, whatever marvellous changes in the conditions of its life took place when it was reunited to Him in His risen life, was the same undissolved thing which had been reverently, lovingly deposited there on the Friday evening. In the body's organised existence between death and resurrection there had been for Him no such break as death makes for us. Whatever, then, identity carries, and does not carry, in the case of His body, will be the facts about the identity of the resurrection body of His people. Further—

3. The "*mystery*," the hitherto hidden and unknown fact, is here (ver. 51), authoritatively published by the Prophet Paul, that at the Lord's coming the *believers* then living will be "*changed*" *without previous death.* [Or, as the speculations of some would require us to say, without any such perceptible or extended interval between the death and the "change" of the body as creates the popular, practical difficulty in connection with the raising of the bodies of the mass of human kind.] In their case, therefore, there is no break, even as brief as in their Lord's case, in the continuity of the union between the same man and his physical part. In bodies which they have never quitted, but which undergo some transformation unknown as yet to us, they stand forth in that eventful Easter morning of the whole Church. (2) and (3) enable, **and require**, us to expect that the believers who "fall asleep" in the ordinary course, and whose bodies are dissolved by death and "see corruption," shall be put into the same condition as their brethren who are changed without dying, and with bodies like their Lord's risen and glorified body. Whatever He and those are, without the parting of soul and body, or the physical dissolution of the body, to that they who die must be elevated or restored. **In whatever sense He wears to-day "the same body"** which trode the fields of Galilee or the streets of Jerusalem; **in whatever sense the "changed" saints will wear "the same body"** which they never for an instant lost; **in that sense** do we require that **our Resurrection body shall be "the same body"** which we wore on earth, and for a while left behind in the moment of our dying. It was part of our Self; the whole, same, redeemed self must be forthcoming, when "God brings, with Jesus, them that sleep in [through] Jesus" and are now somewhere a precious deposit in His safe keeping, "hid, with Christ, in God." More than this we cannot with confidence assert. How much this carries with it we do not know, and have hardly sufficient experience of anything analogous to guide us even in conjecture. The meaning and mode of the "change" are quite unknown to us. Paul speaks of being "clothed upon" in 2 Cor. v. 2, just as here he speaks of "*putting on* incorruption." In Rom. viii. 11 he is express that "*our mortal bodies*"—like Christ's mortal body—are to be quickened, as here he says "*this mortal* must put on." But the *mode* is no clearer for all this. The fact, both of the change of some and of the resurrection of the body of most, is matter of revelation on God's side and of faith on ours. The fact cannot be ruled out as "impossible." "*Christ is risen;*" there is no intrinsic impossibility, therefore, to bar the way of belief. The connection

between the second, "the last, Adam," and the new, regenerate human race of which He is the Head, removes any intrinsic improbability; indeed, it makes it probable that His people shall rise, in soul and body sharing with, conformed to, the conditions of His own risen life.

III. **Difficulties in the way of belief of the "identity" of the buried and the risen body.**—These are to a large extent occasioned by a faulty statement of the doctrine which is demanded and established as above. In the endeavour to grasp or to imagine the *mode* of the body's resurrection, and, still more, to present the fact clearly and vividly to the ignorant, the young, the new convert, or the heathen, a crude, literal restoration of the same particles, and even of the same hair, nails, bones, etc., has been insisted on. But this was only the over-elaboration of popular rhetoric and of undisciplined imagination. [As to the difficulty presented on that theory in the case of a body eaten by a cannibal, whose body also must rise again, it would be only fair to say that there would be no absolute "unthinkableness" or "impossibility," unless on the supposition that some or all of the particles composing one body at the moment of its death were also the components of another body at the moment of *its* death; so that they would be wanted at the resurrection for the restoration and completion of two bodies at the same time. An eventuality against which, if He were pleased to make that one of the conditions of the resurrection, He could guard. It was a fair reply to say, "He *can* do whatever He *wills*, and whatever He says He *will* do." But the underlying supposition which occasioned the objection was extreme in statement. N.B.—The cannibals of Fiji never found the "cannibal" argument an insuperable barrier to belief in a bodily resurrection. "What does God say He will do? That He can and will do."]

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.— Verses* 55—58.

*Triumph; Theology; Duty.*

I. **Does that seem a descending series,** with a step yet lower to xvi. 1, "the collection"? If it be the stone-like drop of the lark, after her soaring, singing, jubilant ascent into an upper world of light and freedom, it has nevertheless her justification; she drops to her nest, her young, her motherly duty. No surer sign of a healthy spiritual life than the simple, easy, natural transition from level to level of thought and talk. Such a life indeed lifts all up to the spiritual level. In the Great House of the soul's Life, it does not go *downstairs*, from the Chapel to the Study, or to the Dining-room or the Kitchen. These, it may be, are less stately and less richly adorned than that; but the soul passes from one to the other all on the same floor.

II. **The connection between Triumph and a true Theology** on the one side, and *between a true Theology and Duty* on the other, is very close. "Faith" lies very near to "The Faith." Religion and dogma are very intimately connected. If religion be the Art of holy living, then is theology its Science. Theology is only the orderly statement of the facts and truths presupposed, whether in the hopes and joys, or in the duty and service, of religion. [Newton said he liked his Calvinism as he liked his sugar in his tea—in solution. Most men's "*ism*" is to-day in solution in their teaching; and always was very much in solution in the thought of the bulk of Christian people. But Newton's "sugar" distinctly "flavoured his tea"; it was unmistakably there, to anybody who knew the taste. Perhaps could have been extracted, weighed, exhibited in separate, orderly, crystalline form.] If, for instance, an earnest man is accustomed, as the very foundation of much of his religious life, to address himself in prayer to Christ, let him be asked and helped to express, in precise and

ordered language, how he supposes that this "Christ" can hear his words and, much more, his unuttered thoughts; also, supposing that He can hear, how, and how far, he expects that Christ can help him in answer to his appeal; when he says at the end of his praying to the Father "for Christ's sake," what relation there is between Christ and the Father, and between Christ and himself, that "for Christ's sake" should be a plea and a reason with God;—the answers will be a very important contribution to a Christology, whether a new one of his own or that of some other man or of some Church. Indeed, to answer Christ's own question fully and precisely, "Whose Son is Christ?" goes down to some of the obscurest depths of Divine thought. Every saved sinner has an informal, unformulated, working "theory of the Atonement," according to which he has laid hold of salvation; just as every preacher or Sunday-school teacher has an unformulated "theory of Inspiration," which determines his treatment of the Word of God, and even his selection of texts. So here the shout of triumph will be thin and hollow, as the dying saint says, "*O death, . . . thy victory? . . . thy sting?*" if he have any misgiving whether, after all, death is not going to be the conqueror; whether, after all, he is not still "*in his sins*"; whether, after all, his Christ be not a mere great name of the past, the name of a man who long centuries ago yielded to death just as others do, and left His body to dissolve into dust, like other bodies.

III. **So a right or wrong Theology will affect Duty.**—(Discussed in part under ver. 32; here needs only to be added:) No doubt as matter of high-level, theoretic virtue, men "ought" to be righteous and diligent and all that is good, for the very intrinsic rightness and betterness and nobleness of Good. So the children at school "ought" to do their lessons well for the reason that it is right, and duty, and the like; prizes or no prizes, they "ought" to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in their work. But the prizes, if illogical as a motive, and indefensible, are a very practical incentive to diligence, and a very real help to even a diligent scholar, when the lessons are hard and the play is tempting. God knows His scholars in the High School of life; and, grown men and women though they be, it will make a difference to them whether or not there are to be any marks and any rewards. He knows that average men and women will not go on year after year pitching the fruit of their labour into a moral Chat Moss, unless like George Stephenson they have the confident assurance that there is a bottom, and that by and-by there will be some solid result to show for their patient toil. They will, like the engineers of a Portland Breakwater, be content to see load after load of solid "*labour*" disappear beneath the surface of the ocean, if they too may hope that some day their toil will appear in solid result above the waters, none really lost. It is of the very essence of death's "*enmity*" (ver. 26) that it cuts off abruptly, inopportunely, often disastrously, the plans and labour and hope of the man who is only "of the world," and whose aims and desires go no further than the horizon whose radius is the thirty, forty, fifty years which may happen to be the probable remainder of his earthly sojourn. The Christian man has "*hoped*" that "*in Christ*" (ver. 19) death will only help forward the attainment of all his hopes and bring him a stage nearer to the fulfilment of the new and larger meaning he now sees in "Life," besides putting him into more favourable conditions than were possible here for both growth and service. But if death is going to break off in mid-course all his plans also, and to frustrate all his hopes and purposes as it does those of the worldling; if he is going to find the first moment of eternity the first also of an eternal disillusion; or, worst of all, if Eternity is to be nothing, because he passes away into Nothing himself, and there is for him neither resurrection nor after-life,—well, then "the game is not worth the candle." Who will "*after the manner of men*" fight with the beasts?

Who will in ascetic gloom refuse to "*eat and drink*"? Why should not he take such pleasure as it is, seeing there is nothing better? Nothing at all at the end of all! Rom. vii. 13-24, 7-12, are our ver. 56 in *résumé*. Plant ver. 56 in mind and heart; let prayer bring upon it the quickening Spirit; let experience develop and record the living germ of truth; it will grow into Rom. vii. 7-24. Death has no "*sting*" unless it borrow one from a guilty conscience. Sin finds its condemnation, and its provocation, in a positive commandment. "*In Christ*" death is only dying, and behind dying there is no proper *death*. "In Christ" the heart runs in the way of the commandment; it no longer conflicts with it, only to its own hurt and condemnation. And "*labour in Christ*" is the labour of Christ Himself in His member. It is really His own "*labour*." How can His labour be "*in vain*"?

## *SEPARATE HOMILIES.*

Vers. 5, 6. "*According to the Scriptures.*"—Two points grow out of this phrase:—

I. This organic unity between Old Testament and New Testament, and between their separate component parts, must not be underestimated. It is a fact perceived by so many students of Scripture, of such various types of mind and training, and so variously equipped with "learning," possessing much or little of it, or (in the ordinary sense) none; it is a fact the evidence for which, whilst it can be conclusively stated in broad outline, nevertheless so reveals its full force, and the abundance of material from which it is drawn, only to patient and minute students of the Scripture, every fresh reading adding to the evidence both wealth and cogency; that it cannot be dismissed as a mistake, a subjective fancy, the dream of a particular, "mystical," cast of mind, or of a particular school of interpretation. All devout readers find forced upon them a consistent scheme and plan in a Revelation developing from the earliest ages, and from what have hitherto been reputed the earliest books, to the latest. Above all, they have seen a disclosure of the coming Christ, growing fuller in detail, more definite in outline, from the beginning onwards. The fact has been too often perceived and verified by too great a number and variety of students of Scripture to be dismissed as an error. Part and part "hang together"; part and part give and receive light and confirmation in turn; the coincidences between Old Testament and New Testament are so many, so often incidental, so often "trivial"—many times escaping notice at a first or many a subsequent reading—that, even mathematically speaking, the chances are infinite against the Coincidence being anything less than, any other than, a real, designed, organic Connection. All the results of many centuries of study of Scripture by students of all types have accumulated "evidence" of internal harmony, of a coherent history, embodying a consistent, gradually unfolding scheme of truth, and an ever clearer disclosure of a Personality, all of which culminates in Christianity and Christ, and finds its clearest expression in Him as He is expounded by the Holy Spirit. All this must be taken account of in the present-day inquiries into the historical value of (say) the earlier story of Israel or of the Mosaic Institute, and into the literary history of the process by which the Bible has reached its present form. Higher Criticism approaches the problem of the origin and composition of the extant Bible, simply as dealing with an ancient literature. It endeavours to discover and exhibit the constituent elements of those books which it believes to show a composite structure; it hopes to trace the process of literary composition, as conducted by several hands at several points of time; it endeavours to trace and date the sources from which material has

been gathered for our present books; it hopes to fix scientifically the authorship of whole books or separate portions. Moreover, it endeavours to appraise the historical value or no-value of the contents of the books. The process of inquiry is perfectly legitimate; the Bible may be examined from that standpoint, as from many others. The results arrived at are reached under the conditions and with the risks attaching to all "specialist" inquiry, or any many-sided or complex subject whatsoever. And they need checking by and co-ordinating with the results arrived at on all other lines of inquiry, and yielded by the examination of all other kinds of evidence, which may bear upon the problem of the literary origin and history of the composition of what, in the issue, is in the hands of the Church as the Old Testament and the New Testament,—the Bible. Inquirers and students who are not competent to attack the problem from the side of literary criticism can and do attack it from the side and study of the organic connection and consistent development of both history and doctrine which is found to obtain in the extant Bible. When some Higher Criticism pronounces that no books in their present form, and no very reliable history amongst their contents, date much farther back than (say) the days of Josiah, and that very much of the Mosaic Ritual Law, and even the Tabernacle itself, is a late, very late, and not very honest, after-thought of a priestly order, then the students of the organic structure and development ask that their results may also be taken into account before the verdict on the whole case is finally given. They point out, *e.g.*, that in vers. 22, 45-49 a parallel is brought out, and wrought out, between Adam and Christ and their respective relations to the race—a parallel which is by no means a mere Rabbinic allegorising of a story which may be a pretty and serviceable myth, but is a development of a great idea of God underlying the whole scheme of ruin and redemption, from its inception in Eden to its consummation in glory. Before the early pages of Genesis are dismissed as unhistoric, the place their narrative occupies in the organically developing Divine plan should be considered. If "Abraham" be a mere eponymic personage, it is difficult to attribute any serious present-day value to the arguments in Gal. iii., iv. as to the relation of "the covenant confirmed to him by God in Christ" to the Law and to the Gospel and the privileges of believers. If the widely current critical account of the origin and history of the Tabernacle and its ritual of atoning and other sacrifices be true, what permanent worth, what truth which would be more than pretty fancies or happy allegorising, what truth for which God could be held responsible, would there be in all the discoveries therein, by (say) the writer of Hebrews, of anticipations of the Great Sacrifice and of the whole scheme of Sin and its Remedy? The whole story of Israel, and especially of its Exodus from Egypt and its Eisodus into Canaan, yields an abundant and abundantly verified harvest of points of spiritual significance and of parallelism with the regenerate life, and with even the historic life of Jesus of Nazareth. All these separate and very significant episodes of the Old Testament story are so used by Christ and His apostles as to bring them into the closest designed connection with the one, whole, harmonious, age-long unfolding of God's redeeming idea and its historical introduction into the world. **If Christ, if Redemption, if the Christian life are all "according to the Scriptures,"**—"Law, Prophets, Psalms," all (Luke xxiv. 44),—**then what are the Scriptures, even in their earliest portions?** If they be not history, then there might have been indeed a developing story of a Redemptive Work, but at all events we have no reliable account of it. If Adam and Abraham and Moses and David are not certainly historical, then all the New Testament account of the

Old Testament preparation for Christ, in which they are essential factors, has no practically certain value.

II. Another suggestion may also be of some practical value. If the Author of Nature be the same with the Author of Revelation, and if there is development apparent in the history of the process by which Nature and Revelation have reached, each of them, their present form and stage, it would only be in agreement with all we know of His work in other directions to expect that the principle of the development would be identical, though the facts with which in the one case and the other it stands connected would belong to diverse orders, whilst yet presenting some analogies to each other. Many a student of Scripture and Revelation can pretend to no such acquaintance with the facts of the natural world as enable him to exercise an independent judgment on the methods or conclusions of the man who is a student of biological science; but he does claim a fairly complete knowledge of the facts of his own special field, where moreover the area of the field is not too large to be very thoroughly known. What he finds to be the truth about development in revelation he would expect to find to hold true in nature—that and no more. He would expect to find that the ultimate form of the theory of Origins, accepted by the students of physical science, will coincide with the result of his own working on his own group of facts, and in his familiar field. He would say, *e.g.*, that "**Man came, and is, '*according to the Scriptures*' of the 'stone book' of the earlier geological history of the earth, just as Christ is, and came, and died, and rose, '*according to the Scriptures*' of the earlier, the Old Testament 'strata' of the successive stages of Revelation.**" The idea of the Creator, first set forth in very meagre, simple form, has in both cases been more and more fully developed. From time to time, never apart from a distinct interposition of the will of the Author of all, a new stage has been reached, a new departure has been taken, a new embodiment of His idea has been exhibited, in both Nature and Revelation. The new form has always been on the same essential lines as the older, but with many modifications, with new touches here and there, with fuller detail everywhere, adapting the old to new conditions and to the requirements of a new stage in the ruling purpose. Until at last the one series of developing expositions of the Worker's thought culminated in Man, and the other in the God-man. [Both in the end meet in Him (Heb. ii.).] Man is the goal of Creation; Christ of Revelation. Man sums up all the creatures which have preceded him; Christ and His history sum up all the persons and the history which preceded them. The development which is verifiable in the history that leads up to Christ will be found to be the verifiable development in the geological and biological history which has led up to man.

Ver. 19. "*If . . . of all men most miserable.*"

I. **A few of the facts which this implies.**—1. *There is misery among men upon earth.* Obviously. But remember three things: (1) *Not so great* misery *as* man's *sin deserves.* (2) *Not so great as man's happiness.* Days, weeks, of affliction; years of health and happiness. (3) *Not so great as the good it will ultimately work out.* Suffering in perdition works no good; here, under Mediatorial rule, it is disciplinary and corrective.

2. *Misery amongst men exists in different degrees.*—Some are "*most* miserable." Calm and sunshine in one lot; storm and darkness in another. One knows nothing of sickness or poverty; another nothing of health and sufficiency. Some followed by consequences of sin, lashed by guilty conscience; some sin and suffer nothing; some have the Christian peace. A day is coming when eternal justice must balance the accounts, for earth's inequalities.

3. *The degree of misery is sometimes regulated by hope.*—Hope directed to right objects, and rightly founded, will bear a man up under all the ills of life, make him calm in the tempest and valiant in the fight; will give him such a grasp on the future as will prevent him from sinking under the present. It will be a firm anchor, holding his ship securely amidst the tumultuous billows of his stormy life. *Yet does not all disappointment grow out of hope?* What is disappointment but a hope lost? And this, but a kind of life lost? Loss of hope is hell.

4. *The hope of a Christian, if false, will make him "of all men most miserable."*—These words must *not* be taken to teach: (1) That apart from the resurrection of Christ man has no [kind or measure of] evidence of a future state. "It is said that the Emperor Frederick III., hearing of the death of a very wicked man, who had lived in prosperity, without having had at any time his health or fortune impaired, and died at the age of ninety-three, said, 'See here a proof of another life.'" So whispers the rational instinct of all. (2) That, on the supposition that there is no future life, the practice of virtue here would place man in a worse condition than vice. Virtue, as embodied in Christianity, would give a man considerable advantage even in this world. "Ways of pleasantness," etc. (3) That, apart from a future state, a godly life is not binding on man. So long as man and his Maker exist in relation to each other, so long his obligation to love Him "with all his heart," etc., must continue. What, then, do they mean? [The writer then greatly limits the truth of the text to the Apostle and his "evangelical contemporaries." (But query this?) Also (he says) remember "*that he supposes the disappointed to survive the discovery of the delusion.*" Else existence would terminate in, or the next moment after, the discovery of the delusion, and there would be no misery at all. (Query, this over subtle?)] *The misery of a tremendous disappointment.* [Is not the usual, "superficial" view truer, that it is that present loss and unhappiness which to the outside world seems in varying degree always to be the price of being a Christian? "The game not worth the candle."]

II. **Several things will tend to aggravate this disappointment.**—1. *The hold which the blighted hope had obtained over the whole soul.* Solomon speaks of the loss of a hope as "the giving up of the ghost." His idea was that the dissolution of a soul from hope was as terrible and distressing as the dissolution of soul from body. Imagine the case of a man who had thrown his whole being into Christianity, who had allowed its doctrines to absorb his thoughts, its precepts to rule his life, its promises to fire his aspirations, and who sanctified all the comforts, advantages, and honours of this life for its sake, being met at the moment when his hopes were at their zenith, and when his death was at hand, with the conviction that all was a delusion; and you have a man "of all men most miserable."

2. *The deception which this blighted hope prompted* [Query, "*led*"?] *its subjects to practise.*—"*False witnesses of God.*" The deception of a hearty and practical believer in Christianity is *earnest.* If he *believes* in the leading subjects contained in the Gospel, he must become an enthusiastic propagandist; the desire to make men believe as he does becomes the dominant passion. His deception is *systematic*, not an occasional attempt, a spasmodic effort, a desultory endeavour; it is the organised purpose of his life. It is *influential.* No system has proved itself more victoriously aggressive. By it these workers "turned the world upside down." To think, then, that not only themselves had been the victims of delusion, but had helped to make others such, would intensify the disappointment, and render them "*most miserable.*"

3. *The destitution in which the departure of the hope would leave the*

*soul.*—Christianity makes a most radical change in a man: what he once loved he loathes, what he once sought he shuns, once valued now despises, what seemed gain to him counts loss. On the discovery of the delusion, he would be left with tastes and desires for which there was no pleasure correspondent. Nothing in the old to meet the new proclivities, and the new has melted away into thin air.

**Conclusion.**—Add these things together, and then—"*most miserable.*" Thank God all this only hypothetic. "**But now Is Christ risen,**" etc.—*Adapted from "Homilist," New Series,* iv. 61.

Ver. 33. "*Evil communications corrupt good manners.*"

I. 1. Hasty, crude thinking would say: "But **that is not Scripture,** though it is *in* Scripture. That is a verse from a heathen poet; not an inspired saying at all." [As might similarly be said of the letter of Claudius Lysias (Acts xxiii. 26-30).] But wherever an architect gets his materials, from whatever quarry he gets a stone, and whatever therefore be its varying quality or character, if he puts it into his building, he makes it his own. It becomes part of his embodiment of his design and idea. He is responsible for its selection and presence and use. He is the author of the whole structure and of every part of it, whether he obtained the constituent parts "ready made" to his hand and purpose, or had to find them in the rough and fashion them himself. This sentence, like the pillars of St. Sophia at Constantinople, the spoils of many more ancient temples, is fetched from another earlier building, where it had its fitness and its strength. This is a stone from a heathen quarry. But the wise builder, Paul, working at the growing, and nearly completed, structure of Revelation, *under the direction of its Divine Architect* works it into the fabric, and when it is once there the Directing Mind is responsible for it; He has made it His own; it serves His purpose of conveying with authority His mind and will to men. [No knowledge—not even of heathen proverbs—comes amiss to a Christian teacher; everything may be made available. All the quarries, all the kingdoms, of the earth belong to our Christ. He will guide His servants how wisely to lay toll on them all!] 2. Whatever be its origin, the saying is *truth.* He who said it formulated the bitter experience of many a benevolent social reformer, of many a parent filled with the sorrow of hopes for his children blighted into worse than failure, of many an amiable theorist starting with some "natural goodness of human nature," only to find that his theory is no *cadre* into which he can fit *all* the facts. [Take only a limited amount of mental luggage; pack away into the portmanteau of your theory just a few selected facts—just those you need—and you may walk away comfortably, triumphantly, in your path of hope and endeavour. But] take entire, universal human nature; take entire, universal experiment and its results; and human nature is not to be trusted to love and follow and struggle for Good. It may approve it, applaud it, love it with a very platonic sort of devotion; but it is divided against itself, and what seems, unhappily, the stronger part gravitates too easily toward evil. There is not even an even balance; the scale turning for evil is loaded. 3. Classical literature has its many familiar confessions of the innate downward drag of human nature. Indeed, never had every experiment that man could suggest for man's elevation been more exhaustively tried, and with larger advantage of conditions for the experiment, than in Grecian and Roman society in the centuries just before Christ. Philosophy, art, government, material refinement, and cultured civilisation, had practically done all that has ever been possible to do; later ages scarcely do more than go the round of the old experiment; man

had done his best for man; and the universal consent of those who know best the age of the world into which God thrust the leaven of the Gospel of Christ is that never was the failure more complete, never were the world's "*manners*" more utterly and hopelessly "*corrupt.*" Every man who repeats the experiment upon himself comes at last to the same result, and to the same sorrowful confession (his pride may not always suffer him to make the avowal aloud), that man unaided by grace cannot keep man pure. He finds that human nature in itself has its affinities, toward evil, not good, nor God; that it has a ready assimilative power for evil; that the evil leaven soon enters, and spreads widely, whilst God's leaven of a new life is slowly admitted, and finds resistance more probable than reception and assimilation. "The dyer's hand is subdued to what it works in." 4. Yet no man very readily believes in the affinity of human nature for, and its inclination toward, evil; in himself, at any rate. Or if he half admit this, he will not consent to count himself in peril. His unformulated, unspoken thought is that he, at all events, is independent of the influences of his surroundings; he can stand firm; he can keep himself from corruption. From gross and open acts of evil he perhaps may; force of character and of will, pride, shame, self-interest, and the like, may enable him to keep free from, or to break off, acts and open habits. But sin is deeper seated in his nature; its presence is more subtle in its diffusion; the susceptibility is throughout. The graver danger is from subtle and pervasive evil; sin is most dangerous where it is only an influence, an environment, always present, unceasing in its deleterious power. It is most perilous as an atmosphere producing a languor, a torpor toward good, and predisposing the enfeebled spiritual life to receive the infection of disease. It is oftener a poison in the cup than an open wound in the battle. It speaks fair, smooth things, when its "*communications*" are most full of corruption and deadly mischief. Man will not believe it of Man; the parent will not believe it of the "nice" child; the man will not believe it of himself, spite of many a sharp, disappointing, disheartening lesson. Paul says, "*Be not deceived.*" All the marvellous, fairy-tale records of modern science as to the assimilative powers of living things in the presence of any particular environment, have their analogies in the facts of the spiritual realm. As the surroundings such—naturally, and but for the grace of God—is the man. "As the man thinketh in his heart so is he," no doubt. The root of all evil character is ultimately within. But it may be held in check by a holy environment. "Holy communications"—especially between the soul and its Saviour—"sanctify evil manners" into good. But more commonly, and with greater facility, "*evil communications corrupt,*" etc. Let no man flatter himself that he shall be any exception. The best weapon of the adversary is the "*deceitfulness* of sin" (Heb. iii. 13). Therefore—

II. **Mind what company you keep**—1. No doubt the grace of God can keep Obadiah in a court where Jezebel is queen, and in a place where a Nero follows a Tiberius, a Caligula, a Claudius, "saints" may be found. But even these need to be on their strictest guard. The very physician who goes into the midst of spiritual disease needs to have a care of his own health. Only One Physician had absolute immunity from danger. [All who do "rescue" work should keep within a full spiritual vigour, a heart that "hates even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 23).] A Christian in worldly or distinctly evil company is a red-hot ball of iron in the midst of blocks of ice. No doubt he may melt them; there is grave danger lest they chill him. 2. For the average Christian, worldliness is a more real peril than open, shocking, repellent wickedness. It is also the more ordi-

nary liability. The surface discrepancy between Christian and non-Christian is not perhaps great; non-Christian life is in many ways affected, shaped, restrained, by the moral standard obtaining, in a general way, in a Christian land. But there is a deep chasm of separation in all their underlying principles. The "counsel of the" *non*-godly can never coincide with the "law of the Lord" (Ps. i.) which is "in the heart" of the Christian man. Their lives may overlap, but they revolve in different circles, struck from distinct centres. 3. *E.g.* the whole standard according to which persons, motives, conduct, are habitually discussed and estimated in the home, is according to man, not according to God. "God is not in all their thoughts;" they may formulate no system of morals and philosophy, but their ethics of business and their view of life in the daily talk at the table and around the fire are practically without God. The interests consulted for, and by which are regulated the planning and execution of their life-work, lie within the narrow range of the horizon of the earthly life; they know, and care to know, nothing of the readjustment of values and proportions which is inevitable as soon as life is seen running on in unbroken continuity into an eternal duration. *E.g.* in the education of their children, or their placing out in life, in their marriages, the soul and its interests have no consideration given to them; society interests, good prospects, natural congeniality and affection—however high and worthy the type of these may be—are all. The Christian visitor in such a home is struck, not so much by what is said or done, but rather *by what he misses* from the customary talk and action and judgments of the family. They are on another, a lower, plane; they are in in closest daily association with him; but they and he live in different worlds of thought and feeling and judgment. 4. He may "endure as seeing Him Who is invisible" (Heb. xi. 27). If he begin each day by getting into very real *rapport* with the Unseen, and if, by often intercourse with it during the progress of the hours, he keep his windows open towards it—keep the eyesight of his soul keen and clear to see it—he may pass through unharmed. But the danger for the young, of half-formed principles, or of no definite principles whatever, is that their world should contract to the narrow limits of that of those around them; that their eye should lose its keenness of vision, or that the world's smoke and mists should besmirch their windows until they cannot see out into the Infinite, nor can the world of the Infinities, the Eternities, the Divinities, reach through to them. The danger is that the standard of judgment, the scales by which they weigh persons, character, motives, aims, should receive—by slight, but continually repeated contacts and impressions—an unhappy, ungodly adjustment. It is natural, and far easier, by little and little to fall into worldling ways of thinking and speaking and action, more than the Christian man is aware; until one day some sudden arrest of circumstance, or some more glaring, startling discrepancy between the worldly and the godly habit and standard, "pulls him up," and reveals to him how far he has travelled, and how widely he has diverged from the love of the law of God and of the ethics of the Gospel of Christ. To the Christian man, who of necessity must spend much of his time with the people of the world, the text comes as a warning lest his spirit catch the infection of their spirit, lest with a fatal plasticity his conscience take their impress and mould. He must keep the resilience, the resistant power, the rigidity, which comes of indwelling grace. "'*Be not deceived*'; do not be 'liberal,' 'broad,' till you become a true worldling in temper and spirit and habit and judgment. '*Evil communications*'—not least the daily talk (ὁμιλίαι); which goes on around you, in the office, in the street, in the house—'*corrupt good*

*manners!*'" (See Appended Note from Robertson.)

III. **Mind what books you read, and what literature.**—1. In a word, mind the mental companionships you form, or allow to yourself. Openly vicious literature will scarcely come in the way of the bulk of decent, ordinary English people. If it did, the first dose would probably create nausea and moral revulsion—though, unhappily, even this may pass away with use. Here again the peril is rather from the literature which the Christian instinct does not so much condemn for what is present as for what is missing. The literature of the world, at its best, "says in its heart, No God." 2. The Puritan code and the practice of the men and women of all the Churches which felt, and still feel, the impress of the Evangelical revival of the eighteenth century, were strict, "narrow"—for themselves and for those whose opinions and habits they could control—in the range of literature they permitted for ordinary reading. They found that to "glorify their God below and find their way to heaven" [by no means forgetting that, whilst the living stream is making its pure, bright way to the Ocean, it needs to be, and cannot help being, a joy and a blessing to all the dwellers along its banks and course] needed all their best energies and all the help they could obtain. At their best, the novel, the play, most of the poetry, of their day demanded the time and gave no help. Their intensely serious view of life was the basis of adjustment for all their standard of permission and perusal. The very newspaper was often looked at askance. The reaction is upon us, in our time, and is carrying Christian people quite far enough in the direction of freedom. All the fields of literature are not full of food-bearing, health-producing growth; yet the tendency is to throw them open to the free range of even the youngest, most inexperienced readers. And without keeping up the old strictness of prohibition, the Christian readers of to-day need to hear, "Be not deceived, evil communications," etc. 3. In fiction, for example, the social code, the valuation of men and character, is seldom that of the New Testament; in some, widely read and favourably reviewed, it is hardly Ten Commandment morality. The masters of fiction, or the great playwrights, are not found working on distinctively Christian lines; they never have done. The relations between man and woman in (say) a masterpiece of art like *Middlemarch* are not according to Christ's law. *Vanity Fair* is drawn by one who is himself a stall-holder in the Fair—so far as its code for character shows. *The Christian* of strong, "spiritual" instincts, in whom is answered the prayer of Phil. i. 9-11, is *not at home in his mental company*, as he reads. He is in continual mental and heart protest against what they say and do, and still more against their principles of action and judgment. And the danger is analogous to that of actually living in such an atmosphere and such company; the danger of adjustment little by little, of assimilation by almost imperceptible degrees—only recognisable in their total result—to the standards and practice and heart of those around him. ["Some (poets) will tune their harps to sensual pleasures, and by the enchantment of their genius will well-nigh commend their unholy themes to the imagination of saints" (Edward Irving, *Div. Oracles*, Oration I.).] 4. Most of the reviewing press, most of the influential literary judgment, is at its best non-Christian in its motives and its standards of appeal. The younger, the unstable, the ill-instructed Christian reader needs be on his guard, lest he "*be deceived*"; lest he be swept away by the strong set of the prevalent current into habits of judgment and esteem which would not be those of "life in Christ." Beauty, masterly workmanship, in art or poetry must not excuse or glorify moral evil. To a Christian instinct

art cannot be non-moral; as a fact, it is not. The master-workman of the modern world, Goethe, is a great heathen. Shakespeare, colossal in his power, embodies, like his mistress Elizabeth [see Green, *History of the English People*, ii. 499, "a brilliant, fanciful, unscrupulous child of earth and of the Renaissance"], the spirit and code, not of the Reformation, but of the Renaissance, in his attitude towards the moralities; it needs a strong, clear, healthy, spiritual tone to read him without some moral soil, and even some of the insensible mental adjustment which is the great peril. The young heart needs to read with Paul's caution even in the ears, "*Evil communications*," etc. Breadth, liberality, which cultivates "toleration," indifference to all such aspects of literature, and appreciates and approves all equally if only *power* be there,—these belong to a life which lives and moves in another world than that which is circumscribed by the sacred limit: "*in Christ*." The "man in Christ" needs in even his mental companionships to be on his strictest guard when he passes into the "world" beyond. It is apt to be "*corrupt*" and "*corrupting*." [Similarly the evolutionary exposition of the facts of the natural world has so got possession of the press, emphemeral and more permanent alike; has so got current in the speech and thought of the leaders of the mind of the world to-day; has so boldly been carried through as a working explanation of the facts dealt with in mental and moral science; that it is difficult not to escape the infection of what, in its extremest interpreters, is a materialism without a God; difficult to come back to, and keep, one's position at the Great Teacher's feet, making His words, "My Father worketh hitherto," the key to one's interpretation and system of Nature. Facts are welcome, whoever discovers, reports, systematises them. The interpretation of the facts needs watching lest it "*corrupt*" the habitual, instinctive thought of the heart, which like Christ sees a world whose "laws" are simply God's rules for His own ordinary, orderly action and government; whose "Force" is ultimately will force — that of His will; a world full of a personal God.]

Ver. 38. "*God giveth it a body.*"

**Introduction.** — In regard to *the special topic* discussed *in this chapter*, this remark of Paul lifts the believer over the stumbling-block of the "*How?*" by referring him to one of the twin bases upon which the Saviour, more than a quarter of a century before, had set the doctrine of the Resurrection in His memorable discussion with the Sadducee scoffers of His day. "Ye do err," He had said, "not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God," *i.e.* His power makes it certain that He can, if He will, raise the dead. [It is not a thing incredible that God —**God**—should raise the dead (Acts xxvi. 8).] And the Scriptures make it certain that He wills to do it (Matt. xxii. 29). All preliminary talk about "impossibility" is swept away so soon as in any real, operative sense God is taken account of; and any further question as to fact or probability is met if there is a positive declaration which is unquestionably from His mouth. But the words are suggestive of what belongs to a much wider field of discussion. To a Christian Theist it is as true of the universal natural order as of the spiritual, that "in all God is all" (ver. 28).

I. **God gave man his present body.** —The little child learns to say its catechism: "*Q.* Who made you? *A.* God made me." And all he may afterwards learn of the physical processes of nature need not take the child's answer out of the man's mouth. Creationism or Traducianism, apart, as far as regards the immaterial element in us, it very soon becomes matter of obvious knowledge that a man's body is no absolutely new beginning, no thing *de novo* fashioned and moulded by any literal "hand" or "fingers" of God; but that, on the other hand, there are many intermediate physical

links of successive or predecessive generations of parentage between any individual of the race to-day and the body of "*the first Adam.*" If a man's special line of study makes him acquainted with the *minutiæ* of the physiological processes between the primal cell and the new-born infant, if he come to know how very closely many of the earlier stages mimic or are allied to those of the starting into growth in the case of a vegetable germ; yet all his added detail of knowledge has made it no more difficult for him to say "God made me" than it is for the grown child or the man who merely sees, as far as all see, the physical organisation of the parents interposed between God the Creator and the new product of His power. What difficulty exists is to both men the same in kind. Merely to be able to follow the intervening links of the process into fuller detail, to be permitted to follow the Great Worker into the inner secrecy of His workshop, and understand better how exceedingly complex and beautiful are the methods He follows, is not to alter the nature of the question at all. It is merely breaking up the one obvious physical link into many, very many; but to see the simple fact that our parents have "given us" our body is as great or as little a difficulty, or as completely no difficulty at all, in the way of saying "God made me," as to see the manifold, multiplied details and physical instruments of the Great Maker's work. And so, too, if all that is claimed for what is popularly called "Evolution" were demonstrated; if the order of developed scheme and idea which it is manifestly possible to arrange out of the multiform creatures of earth's geological and historical ages, an order leading up to, and at every stage more and more frequently suggesting, Man,—if this were demonstrably physically and historically a genealogical succession; if thus between the first living thing and his body of to-day the Christian man of science interposed an unbroken chain of physical antecedents and consequents, not even interrupted at an "Adam" of a "Genesis";—he would still with full intelligence and reasonableness reply to his catechist, "God made me." He again would know that his fuller acquaintance with the details of the process, and his belief that there had been no interposition of the power of God, *de novo* and *ab extra*, in the physical succession since the first living cell was endowed with Life, had made no difference in the essential shape of the question. The first modification from the simplicity of the child's idea of a direct and immediate "making" by God to the necessary knowledge that the "making" had been mediate through human parentage, is the only modification *in kind*; all else is matter of completeness of understanding the mediating term. Between the Maker and the product there is more elaborate machinery; the thing is not so simply and directly "hand-made" as the little child supposed; but that is all. "**God** *gave* me my body: God made **Me**." This leads further afield.

II. **God is active, operative, everywhere, always in His creation.**—"My Father worketh hitherto," said the Son of God, in vindication of His own beneficent Sabbath labour. "Why should not men let healing alone on the Sabbath, and neither the patients come, nor the physician attend to them if they do come? Why not? Why should not I cease such work on the Sabbath? Because my Father does not. The healing of a woman, or the setting of a bone, or the growth of a body, does not cease on the Sabbath, and in all the 'natural processes' which are thus ceaselessly and continuously proceeding, He is at work. They are full of God. They are God at work, Sabbath and weekday." And the Christian takes his view of God in Nature from His Master. [He does not shut Him out of history. He does not believe that when Bible history was completed, and the lives of Bible saints were ended, God ceased to work altogether, or to work as really and effectively in the history and the lives

of our times. He uses the specimen cases of the Bible, authentically opened up and expounded, to show him how to believe in, and to look for, and to see, God in his own life, or in the history of which each morning's newspaper is the latest chapter of continuation. "Worketh hitherto."] The mind and heart of man can never be permanently satisfied, under normal conditions, to think of the glorious kingdom of the visible universe as without a throne or a Monarch, or with only an absentee or indifferent one; it postulates a Father and Head for such a family and such a home. It wants God *near*. The many shades and phases of Pantheistic thought find their charm and their strength in the answer to this demand. But they overdo it, and bring Him too near, confounding and identifying Work and Worker in one undistinguishable Subsistence. The phrase, at any rate, of another school, which spoke of an *Anima Mundi*, a Soul of the World, was nearer the truth, imperfect as all creaturely and human analogies must be. The Christian thinker does not confound his soul with his body. He can only speak of either in negations of the other; but he knows them distinct. And he asks himself whether all this great, this vast, physical frame of things stands in any similar relation to God as his own physical part does to his thinking, feeling, willing part. The only force of which he knows anything directly and really is will force, the force of his own will; and though the midmost meeting-place and link of connection between mind and body is veiled from him under thickest darkness, yet he knows how Will in him wields, and moves, and can mould, his physical part, and through it the physical around him. And then he asks whether he can say or think anything truer or wiser, or at any rate more probable, than that the One Will wields and moulds and moves all this vast physical frame of things, and that all the "forces" which we count and calculate and measure and use are but many variations of the putting forth of the One Force, that of the Will of Him who long ago made the matter of His universe, and from that time to this has never taken His hand off the thing He made. In the case studied above, suggested by Paul, he does not conceive that he is really any farther away from God because he sees the thing "machine-made" rather than directly "hand-made." His Father "Who worketh hitherto" designed the machine, and made it, and works it, and has His hand upon it at every intermediate point between Himself and what He produces by it. The "design argument" loses none of its force to him, if even he should think that "natural selection" or any other combination of physical forces proves to be the method by which the Designer has effected His purpose. The Design is there. The "natural" is of God as really as the "supernatural"; the "miraculous" is the special for the purpose of Revelation; the "natural" is the ordinary, orderly method by which He chooses to proceed in Creation and Providence. If the Idea of Creation gets a physical embodiment, it is because "*God giveth it a body, as it hath pleased Him.*"

III. **God gave Adam a body.**—Did even the early Italian painters, of the simplest ages of faith, really believe literally in the grand, bearded, old-man-like Creator Whom they represented bending over a newly made body moulded with His literal fingers out of dust? After the days of his childhood, no simplest, most old-fashioned believer in a distinct creation of Adam's body ever so conceived of it. They knew and believed that "no man hath seen or can see" God. Even they, believing in a direct and immediate new beginning with the body of "*the first Adam*," did not seriously and literally think that if they had been present at its formation their eyes would have beheld any visible Modeller, with literal hands shaping "the dust of the earth." If they had at all pursued the matter so far, they would at most have

expected to see a body growing into shape before them, in similar fashion to that so vividly described by Huxley. "Of all the perennial miracles [Nature] offers to the student's inspection, perhaps the most worthy of admiration is the development of a plant or of an animal from its embryo. Examine the recently laid egg of some common animal, such as a salamander or a newt. It is a minute spheroid in which the best microscope will reveal nothing but a structureless sac, enclosing a glairy fluid, holding granules in suspension. But . . . let a moderate supply of warmth reach its watery cradle, and the plastic matter undergoes changes so rapid, and yet so steady and so purposelike in their succession, that one can only compare them to those operated by a skilled modeller upon a formless lump of clay. As with an invisible trowel, the mass is divided and subdivided into smaller and smaller portions, until it is reduced to an aggregation of granules not too large to build withal the finest fabrics of the nascent organism. And then, it is as if a delicate finger traced out the line to be occupied by the spinal column, and moulded the contour of the body; pinching up the head at one end, the tail at the other, and fashioning flank and limb into due salamandrine proportions, in so artistic a way that, after watching the process hour by hour, one is almost involuntarily possessed with the notion, that some more subtle aid to vision than an achromatic, would show the hidden artist, with his plan before him, striving with skilful manipulation to perfect his work." (Huxley, *Lay Sermons*, 260, 261.) The Christian scientific observer believes that under the lens of his microscope he actually is beholding Creative Power and Will mysteriously meeting, touching, moulding, Matter. *God is there giving the salamander a body.*

IV. **God giveth the risen man His body.**—We thus return to our starting-point. There is no real difficulty in the question, "*How can the dead*—the *dead*, the **dead**! do you see them? —*be raised? With what* (kind of) *body do they come* from their grave?" That they will come forth—all of them, and not only those "*in Christ*"—is for His disciples conclusively settled by one word of the Master. They "know this Scripture" (John v. 28, 29) [where "in the graves" is in very precise and defining contrast with "the dead" of "the hour that now is" in ver. 25]. "How?" What need to ask "how"? The closest students have not exhausted yet the whole range of the variety of His methods, nor seen any suggestion of a limit to many and startlingly novel possibilities of new methods, or of new exertions of the old, the one, power. As He gave the buried body, so He must, and will, give the raised-up body. Whether working on His accustomed lines or in His sovereign freedom and mastery striking out new ones for Himself, it is but the One Worker. And as there has never yet arisen a demand for which He has not made adequate provision, so for the new demand of the new life, and the new environment of the new world, He may either make a new thing altogether, or modify the old thing and the old type, "*as it pleases Him.*" That is all that can be said. To the intellect or the heart which does not know our God that is to say nothing. To the intellect that acknowledges Him, and to the heart that believes in and loves Him, that is enough. "*God giveth*" to the seeds of His human sowing "*their body*," "*their own*," appropriate "(kind of) *body*," "*spiritual bodies*" for spiritual men, for ever one with Him who "*was made a quickening Spirit.*"

## *HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.*

Ver. 6. "*Fallen asleep.*"—Sleep the new, Christian name for Death. The new, Christian name for a burial-place: *Cœmetery* ( = Sleeping-place).

I. **Merely an incident in a continuous life.**—1. *No break* at death in the personal life. The same Self awakes; and, through the night's parenthesis in consciousness and activity, the same Self has gone on. [No inference to be drawn from the figure, as to any asserted loss of consciousness between death and resurrection. **Figure only suitable at all as seen from the spectator's standpoint, not the sleeper's.**] "I shall awake—I." "I shall see for myself," etc. Shall answer the call of the awakening trumpet, with the consciousness that it is my same Self which greets the dawn of the eternal Day. 2. As, of a morning, the happy soul has many a time awoke eager to resume "fellowship with the Father"; has awoke to find the Father, Who has been waking whilst the child slept, still there, just as He was there, filling the last moments of last night's consciousness with the sense of His presence; so the soul which closed its eyes in the presence of the Father, wakes from this "Sleep" to say, as its first glad greeting of the Morning of Eternity: "When I awake I am still with Thee!" The same Self awakes, to find the same God, and to enjoy the same holy fellowship.

II. **Sleep has the prospect of awakening.**—Bold unbelief in the French Revolution wrote upon the gate of Père la Chaise, "Death is an *eternal* sleep." No. Whatever Death may introduce to, it is but to a terminable, temporary experience. The "grave is not the goal" of life; only another, passing, stage towards the goal. [The certainty of the awakening "*in Christ*" is mainly in this chapter. But the man out of Christ is to remember how temporary is the episode called "Death"; how certain is the awakening; how he then *takes up* again, how indeed he has all through *taken along* with him, the old responsibility and guilt.]

III. **A brief passage in our continuous existence.**—Ps. xc. 5 reminds how a night's sound sleep seems but as a moment; a man seems only just to have come to rest. It will *not* be *long* before our "sleeping" shall be broken in upon by the voice of one who says tenderly, and yet mightily, "Talitha cumi" (almost = "Awake up, my child"). Then also *rest* is suggested; an escape from the trouble and clamour of life, and from the tension which strain brain and heart almost past endurance (2 Thess. i. 7).

IV. **Remember**: "Asleep *in* Christ;" "asleep *through* Jesus."

V. **Remember** the first instance of the phrase: Stephen has struggled to his knees for a prayer, after the crush of the first stones, hurled upon his chest by the witnesses, as he lay upon the ground. Next he is struck down again by the hail of stones, or sinks exhausted. But he sees his Lord "standing," watching the scene with keen interest; standing, as if He could not keep His seat upon His throne, in His eager restlessness to welcome the first to follow Him through the gate of blood into heaven's rest. And he no longer sees the scowling, angry, murderous faces that glower upon "the Nazarene blasphemer." The shouts of execration die out of his ears. He perhaps hardly longer feels the stones. He sees the Son of Man, and "*falls asleep.*" A rough bed for the death scene!

Ver. 6. *Some are fallen asleep.*—The first reflection upon the early resting of one of the ministers [workers] of Jesus Christ comes most naturally in the words of His own comforting question, "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" He gave it as a reason for not shrinking from the risk of returning into a dangerous place at the call of duty. "Immortal till His work was done," He would "go into

Judæa again." He would "walk to-day and to-morrow and the day following," regardless alike of Herod's threatening and of Judas's treachery; the day has twelve hours, and it will surely see them to their close. This teaches us a new measurement of time. It is not the accomplishment of the threescore and ten or fourscore years which makes a life complete in the reckoning of God's sanctuary. The life of a little child has its twelve hours. It may be a complete life, as God sees it, quite as truly as the life which has been dragged out to its utmost length of ninety years or a hundred. It may as perfectly have accomplished the thing whereto He sent it—it may have borne as real a testimony to His loving, life-giving grace—as if childhood had lived on into youth, and youth into manhood, and manhood into old age. "They reckon not by days and years, Where he has gone to dwell." There were twelve hours, even in that life's brief day. Though the constituent "hour" may not have been one year long, still—to apply, somewhat inaccurately, the words of a Prophet—still "the child may die," in God's reckoning, "a hundred years old." Certainly there may be the twelve hours of a very full day in a [ministerial] life very brief in years. Some of the men of everlasting remembrance in the Church [of England] have died at the age of thirty years or under. *It is the devotion which counts. It is the earnestness which tells.* We do not undervalue the testimony of a long life—a life protracted into days even of weakness, suffering, and silence in the holy service. But we say this, that in some respects, and for some purposes, no testimony is like the testimony of the young, and no [life's] ministry has the same astonishment in it, for the world that looks on, as [that] of one who, with all the life in him, all the impulses which drive others into self-indulgence and sin, is seen firm in principle and resolute in duty, having "given *himself* first to the Lord," and then all he has—all that he might have enjoyed, and all that he might have become.

* * * *

Brethren, the time is short for the youngest of us—what must it be for the one eldest? . . . Age advances, and death must come; let us work while it is day. Let us help one another while we can. Let us remember them that are fallen asleep, trying to follow them as they followed Christ, "whose faith follow, as you contemplate the end of their conversation"—their death, that is, in the faith of Jesus; remembering that One Person never dies—"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day and for ever." Let us cherish the bond which binds us to each other—a true bond, powerful to knit hearts. Let us pray for one another, that we may all meet at last, not one missing, in that world of which it is written, "These are they that have washed their robes"—they were not clean always—"and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore," etc.—*Extracted from sermon by Dean Vaughan, "Rest Awhile,"* pp. 94-100.

Ver. 6, coupled with ver. 34.

I. **There is a death which is only a sleep.**

II. **There is a sleep [of sin] which is a [moral] death** (Eph. v. 14).

Ver. 10. *All of Grace.*

I. **Our experience.**

II. **Our labours.**

III. **Our success.**—[*J. L.*]

Ver. 11. *Two All-important Things about the Preaching.*

I. **Not the preacher, but the truth preached.**—["*Whether I or they;*" that matters nothing.]

II. **Not the hearing, but the belief** of the truth.—[*J. L.*]

Ver. 14. *Reverse the Proposition.*

I. **Preaching is not in vain.**—It has power. It effects moral miracles.

II. **Faith is not vain.**—It brings comfort, pardon, life. Therefore—

III. **Christ is risen.**—[*J. L.*]

Ver. 26. *The Sub-final Act in the Drama of Human History.*

I. "**The last enemy**" met and subdued by—

II. "**The last Adam.**"—Sentence of deposition was long ago passed against the usurping power. [Cf. John xii. 31; couple with it the Temptation in the Wilderness; and Luke x. 18.] It has struggled to keep its hold on the race; but every soul "fallen asleep," "not seeing death," has been a blow to its *prestige*, a defeat in detail. Now Death shall never seize another individual of the race; this shall no longer be a *mortal* stock. The other Death—the *only real* "Death"—shall still hold its captives, and shall hold them eternally, for there shall be no more *dying* henceforward.

Ver. 31. "*I die daily.*"

I. **Physically.** — From the first moment of life we begin to die. For thirty or forty years the forces which make for life and recuperation outweigh and hold in check the forces which make for waste, decay, death. But after that point the balance turns against life; life fights a losing battle. Dying daily, dying from the first, we die at last.

II. **Voluntarily.**—For Christ's sake Paul held life as not worth more than a day's purchase. "*Always bearing about* the dying," etc. (2 Cor. iv. 10; observe the forcible Greek word).

III. **Experimentally.**—Gal. vi. 14. What does the world matter to a crucified man hanging there in death? It can do no more for him; he cares no more for it.

IV. **Believingly.**—In hope of a better life.—*Suggested by J. L.*

Vers. 31, 32. "*When will you die?*"

I. **The ignoble life says, "To-morrow we die!"**—This is the reckless temper which makes men take their full fling of riot and carouse, when the city is swept with the plague [Athens, London]; or when the enemy is at the gate [Babylon (Dan. v.), Jerusalem beleaguered by the Assyrians (the original of this quotation, Isa. xxii. 13)]; the carouse and gambling in the condemned cell on the morning of the execution. "We die to-morrow; so 'go it' to-day!" *Or at best* the temper *which adjourns unpleasant things* till "to-morrow." The characteristic word of the Spaniard is *Mañana*, "to-morrow." The "natural" heart in man says "To-morrow" in regard to the claims of Christ (Acts xxiv. 25), to difficult duties, to preparation for death. It *shirks* the irksome, the serious, the religious. "We *must* die; then let it be to-morrow."

II. **The noble life says, "I die daily—to-day.**—The nobler type, even in regard to natural character and to secular matters, faces at once the unpleasing, the difficult, the obligatory; to "*shunt*" things into to-morrow's "siding" is no manly discharge of to-day's life-work. There are Christian "shufflers" as well as secular; or "happy-go-lucky" souls, who never fully face the Cross in their religious life. Souls like Paul—and he is like the Master—"take up their cross *daily*." When the hardest, sorest trial to nature is thus met and dealt with, character has then gained in manliness and strength. There is a subtle paralysis in having a vague terror in the background, or an unfulfilled, outstanding obligation hanging over one's head. How many lives are noble because of a daily crucifixion of self and of all evil! None but their Crucified Lord knows how keen is the anguish as they hang upon the daily Cross within, for His sake. Themselves driving in the nails, waking every morning to the Cross they find prepared for them, which they accepted long ago. "*Mortify* your members," etc. (Col. iii. 5). [Also observe how Paul almost ventures to parallel with that of Christ his own daily dying in its effects to others. "*Bearing about . . . the dying . . .* **in order that** *the life . . . in you.*"]

Ver. 32. "*What advantageth it me?*"

I. **Seeing that the dead do rise,**

then what advantageth it? Principally *there is a future life* for me. For this stands or falls with the resurrection of the dead. So then, as Dean Alford said, in a letter printed in his Life: "When we have one moment said 'Good night!' here, the next we shall be met with the welcome, 'Good morning!'" *Then* (as ver. 58) I do not labour or suffer with the paralysing fear that all my labour is "putting money into a bag with holes," "grinding the wind," "ploughing upon the rock," or whatever be the illustration of useless, fruitless labour.

II. 1. **If the dead do not rise** [though for the moment, in "*most miserable*," and "Let *us eat and drink*," Paul may adopt the tone, and speak with the verdict, of mere natural men, careless or desperate, yet even he would say, "*Profitable for the life that now is*"], if virtue is better than vice, benevolence than selfishness, truth than falsehood, then there is yet, as even a few noble heathen felt, still an advantage. 2. But this will not stand the "hard wear" of the world, of the poor, or tempted, or evil-disposed. A man soon sinks below the level where there is any advantage in being righteous for its own sake. He may easily sink low enough to escape the scourge of conscience, and to enjoy the "eating and drinking" of the sensuous, sensual life. 3. Yet if our faith be a delusion, it is one that serves well the purposes of life. Faith in God and Immortality and a Saviour has wrought, as nothing else has done, for thousands whom nothing else would have touched, peace of conscience, righteousness of life, confidence in face of the future, victory over fear of death.

III. **Conclusion.**—1. "Try our way, sinner!" 2. "Try your way, sinner? No. Listen to another 'What advantageth?' (Luke ix. 25)." [Loyola won Xavier, the teacher of philosophy at Paris, by an incessant repetition of his question, "*What shall it profit a man?*" etc. Threw himself into his every pursuit; into disputations, into amusements; accommodated himself to every merriest mood; went with him for long walks; and every conversation led up to the refrain, "*What shall it profit?*" etc. Xavier lost his money and his pupils by his self-indulgence and folly. Loyola regained for him pupils and popularity, and came back amidst all the applause and excitement with his burden, "*What shall it profit?*" Again Xavier squandered all. Loyola begged for him, and brought him a purse, and again pressed his question, "*What shall it profit a man?*" Read this fully, and the account of Xavier's death on the shores of China, in Stephen, *Eccles. Biogr.* "*If the dead* rise not," what *did* it all advantage Xavier?]

## *APPENDED NOTES.*

Vers. 23, 24. "*The coming; the end.*"—This "coming" of Christ is not, merely or exclusively, to establish His kingdom, but to judge the quick and the dead . . . (compare 1 Thess. ii. 19, iii. 13, iv. 15, v. 23, *al.*). Whether any, and, if any, what interval is to be supposed to exist between this "*coming*" and "*the end*" of the following verse—in fact, between "*then*" and "*then*"—the sober interpreter cannot presume even to attempt to indicate. This only may be said, that the language *seems* to imply a kind of interval; but that there is nothing in the particles or in the passage to warrant our conceiving it to be longer than would include the subjugation of every foe and every power of evil, and all that may be immediately associated with the mighty "*end*" which is specified in the succeeding verse. . . . It must be carefully remembered that the Apostle is here dealing with a single subject, the resurrection of the dead, and not with the connected details of eschatology. These must be gathered from other passages and other portions of Scripture. . . . The great difficulty in Christian eschatology is the exact position which all that is specified in Rev. xx. 4 is to be supposed to hold in the sequences of the unfolding future. . . . Perhaps all that can be safely said is, that neither here nor in 1 Thess. iv. 16 does the Apostle preclude the conception of a resurrection of the just (compare Luke xiv. 14)—possibly gradual; that in some passages (consider Rom. xi. 12-15) he does seem to have looked for a "flowering time" of the

Church prior to the close of human history; and that here he distinctly implies a closing conflict with all the powers of evil (compare Rev. xx. 7, 15) immediately prior to the end. That the millennial binding of Satan is to be dated from the death and resurrection of our Lord has been recently urged, . . . but to the detriment, as it would seem, of the distinctive idea of the millennium.—*Bishop Ellicott.*

Ver. 23. "*His coming.*"—*Parousia*, indicating that when He comes He will always be present; the time of His absence will have passed away for ever. . . . His presence, which will then be so different from what it is now that the change from the one to the other is no less than a coming again. —*Pope.*

Ver. 24. "*The end.*"—There will be an end and beginning of the Redeemer's Kingdom, as it is a kingdom of grace translated into glory.

I. The mediatorial economy will cease in its relation to the Triune God; the redemptional Trinity which introduced the economy of subordination in the Two Persons will be again the absolute Trinity. The Son Incarnate will cease to mediate; as Incarnate He will be for ever subordinate, but there will be nothing to declare His subordination: no mediatorial rule over enemies, no mediatorial service or worship of His people. The Triune God will be seen by all mankind in the *face of Jesus Christ*, and the mediation of grace will become the mediation of glory. The Intercessor will pray for us no more, but will reveal the Father openly for ever. . . . The prayer of our Lord (John xvii. 21) will then have been fulfilled, "*one in Us.*" Man taken up into the Us of the Triune God will need a mediator no more.

II. The kingdom will cease because its ends will have been attained. "*Then cometh the end*" . . . to the Father as the Representative of the Trinity; "*when He shall have put down.*" . . . The process of His victories is declared in the Apocalypse: first and last, the Anti-Christ, which is a spirit of infidelity, Against Christ, having many forms, such as the Beast and the Man of Sin, and also a final personal manifestation; every description of heathenism to the ends of the earth; the corruption of Christianity, exhibited in Babylon and the Second Beast and the Harlot; and finally Death, the last enemy that shall be destroyed. In all these conflicts the Church is the fellowship of companions in "*tribulation*," etc. (Rev. i. 9). We are one with our Lord, and He is one with us, in this progressive warfare and final victory. It is as "*Head over all things to the Church*" that the Redeemer exercises now and will end then His rule; nor is any other supression of authority alluded to than that which opposed the designs of His mediatorial kingdom. Moreover, there is nothing said of the destruction, only of the putting down of all hostile authority and power.

III. The kingdom will have a new beginning: new as the kingdom of the "*new heavens*," etc. . . . The Spirit of Christ will be the immanent bond between Him and us, between us and the Holy Trinity (1 Cor. vi. 17). The Incarnate Person will then be glorified as never before; His personality as Divine will be no more veiled or obscured by any humiliation, nor will it be intermittently revealed. **God** shall **be all in all**, first in the Holy Trinity and then through Christ in us. —*Pope*, "*Compend. of Theology*," iii. 425, 426.

Ver. 27. "*He hath put all things under His feet.*"—It has often been asked whether David, in ascribing such dignity as he here does to man, was speaking of man in his present condition, degraded from his supremacy by the fall, or of man as originally made in the image of God and gifted with dominion over the lower creation. Now the language of the Psalm certainly points to the present. There is no trait in it of any difference between man's original destiny and his present condition, between the ideal and the actual. Man *is* king of this lower world; though, because he has cast off his allegiance to the King of kings, his own subjects have renounced their allegiance to him, so that he rules by force, or manifold arts, rather than by right acknowedged and respected. But were there any higher thoughts in David's mind? Was he thinking of man as redeemed and restored in the second Adam to his rightful supremacy? . . . We, who read these words in the light of the Incarnation, may see in them a significance which to his own mind they would hardly have possessed. Twice in the New Testament passages of this Psalm are applied to Christ: once by St. Paul rather in the way of allusion than of direct quotation (1 Cor. xv. 27), where he teaches that what was said by David of man is in its truest and highest sense applicable to Christ as the Great Head of Mankind; and, again, by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (ii. 6-9), who, arguing that the words [of our verse] have not yet been literally fulfilled of man, declares that their proper fulfilment is to be seen only in Jesus . . . "crowned with glory and honour." He does not say that the Psalm is a direct prophecy of Christ; but he shows that man's destiny as depicted in the Psalm is not and cannot be accomplished out of Christ. He is the true Lord of all. In Him man recovers his rightful lordship, and shall really be in the new world of Redemption what now he is very imperfectly, God's vicegerent ruling a subject creation in peace and harmony and love.—*Perowne*, "*Psalms*," Ps. viii.

[Much also of the following passage is illustrative of ver. 27:] "The use made of this Psalm in the Epistle to the Hebrews proceeds on the understanding that it describes ideal humanity. Where, then, says the writer of the Epistle, shall we look for the realisation of that ideal? Do not the grand words sound liker irony than truth? Is this poor creature that crawls about the world, its slave, discrowned and sure to die, the Man whom the Psalmist saw? No. Then was the fair vision a baseless fabric, and is there nothing to be looked for but a dreary continuance of such abortions dragging out their futile being through hopeless generations? No; the promise shall be fulfilled for humanity, because it has been fulfilled in one man, the Man Christ Jesus. He is the realised ideal, and in Him is a life which will be communicated to all who trust and obey Him, and they, too, will become all that God meant man to be. The Psalm was not intended as a prophecy, but every clear vision of God's purpose is a prophecy, for none of His purposes remain unfulfilled. It was not intended as a picture of the Christ, but it is so; for He and He alone is the Man who answers to that fair Divine Ideal, and He will make all His people partakers of His royalty and perfect Manhood."—*Maclaren, "Psalms," Expositor's Bible.*

Who does not know how the *tone* of evil has communicated itself? Worldly minds, irreverent minds, licentious minds, *leaven* Society. You cannot be long with persons who by innuendo, double meaning, or lax language show an acquaintance with evil, without feeling in some degree assimilated to them, nor can you easily retain enthusiasm for right amongst those who detract and scoff at goodness. None but Christ could remain with the impenitent and be untainted.—*Robertson, "Expos. Lectures," on* 1 *Cor.* v. 6.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### *CRITICAL NOTES.*

Ver. 1. **The collection.**—Very fully dealt with in 2 Cor. viii., ix. Traceable thus; earlier, in Gal. ii. 10, Paul's original pledge that he would "remember the poor," which he had already led the way in doing (Acts xv. 29); Paul "*gives order*" to the Galatian Church, (here) and now to the Corinthian; he "boasts" of the beginning made at Corinth to the Thessalonians and Philippians and Berœans (2 Cor. ix. 2); to be completed at Corinth before his delayed visit (*ib.* vers. 3-5; here, ver. 2); the collection made, or in the making, in Macedonia and Corinth, is, when Romans is being written, nearly ready to be taken up to Jerusalem, and (perhaps) is mentioned, as an indirect, suggestive appeal to the Romans for assistance (Rom. xv. 26). It duly reached Jerusalem ([Acts xxi. 19], xxiv. 17). Evidently a thing already known of at Corinth. **The saints.**—From Rom. xv. 26, evidently *at Jerusalem.* The community of goods (Acts ii. 44, iv. 32) had not caused, but had attempted for a time to palliate, a chronic poverty at Jerusalem; aggravated probably in the case of Christians by the loss of home and friends and livelihood for Christ's sake, and by the famine of Acts xi. 28-30. **Gave order.**—Acts xviii. 23. Notice "*Churches*," not "*Church in Galatia.*"

Ver. 2. **Gatherings.**—"*Collectings*," as in ver. 1. **When I come.**—To delay Paul, or divert their attention from more important things at his visit. Notice a suggestion here that "*the first day of the week*" is becoming a day in some way emphasised by Christians. Cf. John xx. 26; Acts xx. 7; perhaps Rev. i. 10 also; further it is urged, as, *e.g.*, by Bishop Bramhall: "That the Day of Pentecost fell upon a Sunday is undeniable; because the "Resurrection of Christ was upon a Sunday, and Pentecost was the fiftieth day from the Resurrection."

Ver. 3.—Co-delegates of Paul, chosen by other Churches (2 Cor. viii. 19, 23). **Letters.**—Such as Paul did *not* need (2 Cor. viii. 4).

Ver. 4. **Meet.**—If the collection raised was so large as to make it fitting, or desirable, that *an apostle* should escort it, or be its "convoy."

Ver. 5.—This arrangement set aside an earlier plan (2 Cor. i. 16) to come direct to Corinth from Ephesus by ship, and thence to go to Macedonia. Now he will come to Corinth *viâ* Macedonia. This change of plan now announced occasioned the misconception and misrepresentation of 2 Cor. i. 17, etc. The true reason was 2 Cor. i. 23.

Vers. 5, 6.—"*I* (only) *pass through* (not stay in) *Macedonia*; I shall perhaps *stay, and perhaps even winter with you.*" **You.**—Emphatic: "I want that to be *your* help to me: I want to have *you* do it."

Ver. 7. **By the way.**—*I.e.* merely as passing through Corinth; Corinth should be the "objective" of his journey "*now*," as it was not in the earlier plan. No sure argument to be based on this "*now*" as if it meant that he *had* seen them *en passant* on some (unrecorded) visit, between his first, long one in Acts xviii. and this proposed one.

Ver. 8.—Then he is *writing in* Ephesus; probably in the Spring [Passover is perhaps about due, or just being celebrated, v. 7 (where see)]; by Pentecost navigation would be perfectly open.

Ver. 9. **Door.**—Col. iv. 3; 2 Cor. ii. 12 (at Troas); Acts xiv. 27; Rev. iii. 8, are worth comparison. "An opportunity great and already beginning to show fruit," or "calling for effective utilisation." Yet "*many adversaries*," whose opposition culminated in the riot of Demetrius (Acts xix.). Note, these are a motive to Paul not to fly, but to stay.

Ver. 10. **If Timothy come.**—Read Acts xix. 21, 22. But had he not been "sent specially, and with definite instruction? . . . The Apostle felt it quite possible that his messenger's [who was sent *viâ* Macedonia] arrival might be delayed, and that, as appears really to have been the case, he might not at that time reach them at all. Timothy was . . . still in Macedonia when the Apostle wrote . . . 2 Cor. i. 1" (Ellicott). **Without fear.**—Some years after this he was still a *young* man (1 Tim. iv. 12). Ellicott protests a little against the usual inference from these passages, and from 2 Tim. i. 6, 7, ii. 1, as being very precarious indeed, viz. that Timothy was gentle, or even timid. For more of Timothy, see Phil. ii. 20, 22. **The Lord.**—Expounded as "of *Christ*" (Phil. ii. 30).

Ver. 11. **Despise him.**—Timothy is to see that he on his part does nothing which shall lead them to do so (1 Tim. iv. 12). Stronger word here than there. **The brethren.**—Viz. those travelling with the money raised for the Relief Fund, and named or indicated in 2 Cor. viii. 18, 22, 23 (Stanley). Or only his companion Erastus, with perhaps others (Acts xix. 22). **I expect him.**—*I.e.* on the supposition that he did reach Corinth.

Ver. 12.—Stanley continues his reading of ver. 11 by supposing that Titus only became the head of the mission after Apollos had excused himself from going; perhaps lest the self-styled, "Apollos" party should try to *exploit* him, to their advantage over their rivals. *Apollos* seems to be *back again* at Ephesus, after Acts xix. 1. See how happy the relations between him and Paul. The "*will*" is surely that of Apollos; not of God!

Vers. 13, 14.—"The whole duty of the Corinthian convert [summed up] in the trying times and amid the varied temptations in which this Epistle would find him" (Ellicott). (See homiletic treatment below.)

Ver. 15.—Postscript-like personal matters *begin here.* **Achaia.**—This corrects the wrong reading in Rom. xvi. 5. **Stephanas' household.**—See i. 16. What a family picture! "Addicted to," etc. Stanley (apparently alone) thinks the Stephanas of ver. 17 the slave of this one, who had taken his master's name, by a not unusual custom; Fortunatus and Achaicus being his fellow-slaves.

Ver. 17.—No blame to the Corinthians in "*lacking on your part*"; they *could not*, so far away and without opportunity to visit Paul, do what these had done, viz. ver. 18 (Phil. ii. 30, iv. 10 *sqq.*).

Ver. 19. **Church in . . . house.**—Cf. i. 2, xvi. 1; Rom. xvi. 5. See other cases, Col. iv. 15; Philem. 2. Observe "*salute you* **much.**" They had lived in Corinth (Acts xviii. 2); but are at Ephesus by xix. 26.

Ver. 20. **A holy kiss.**—Rom. xvi. 16; 2 Cor. xiii. 12; 1 Thess. v. 26. "The common form of affectionate Eastern salutation, transferred to the forms of the Christian society, and hence the epithet of *holy*. The practice continued in Christian assemblies chiefly at the celebration of the Eucharist. The Apostolical Constitutions and the Canons of Laodicea enjoin that before the Communion the clergy are to kiss the bishop, the men amongst the laity each other, and so the women. On Good Friday it was omitted, in commemoration of the kiss of Judas. . . . It is still continued in the Coptic Church. Every member of the congregation there kisses and is kissed by the priest. In the Western Church it was finally laid aside in the thirteenth century." (Stanley.)

Ver. 21.—The authenticating autograph, vers. 21-24. So 2 Thess. iii. 17. What shall it be? What shall he write? What is worthy of his own hand, after all this dictating to an amanuensis? "*If any man*," etc. (ver. 22). Note the R.V., shorter reading *and punctuation.* **Maran atha.**—"Syriac," so-called. "*The Lord . . . has? or will? . . . come.*" "*Cometh*," best. Very recently M. Halévy divides it "Marana tha," and translates "Our Lord, come!" And in this is supported by (the Syrian) Archbishop David, of Damascus (*Expos.*, 1889, p. 240). Quite a separate word from the word "*Anathema.*" N.B. "*His* grace;" "*my* love."

## HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—*Verses* 1—4.

"*Concerning the collection.*"

**I. Note the place and the manner of the introduction of the topic.**—This wonderful letter is drawing to a close. Might have believed chap. xiii. an unsurpassable climax of interest and beauty but that chap. xv. has followed, surpassing it at least in the interest of its amazing disclosures of the future. "Chap. xv. is certainly the climax." Yes; but this "Now concerning the collection" is not an anticlimax. Paul certainly did not feel it so; indeed, rhetorical form in his letters can, hardly more than in his preaching (ii. 1), have been any object of endeavour or of thought to him. Chap. xv. was no "climax" to him. The climactic effect and magnitude of the chapter is in the matter of the chapter. One can hardly conceive of him as, so to speak, taking breath after the long climb to the heights of chap. xv., and pausing to review complacently the long way up and to take in the height to which he and his readers have attained, before dropping to another, lower, commonplace level of money matters and route arrangements and personal talk. Can hardly suppose that he felt nothing of the different magnitude of the topic now to be dealt with; yet clearly he passes from the Resurrection to the Collection with no sense of any impropriety, or incongruity, or unworthiness of sequence. There is no incongruity, nothing unworthy; both are equally parts of Paul's message to Corinth, or rather of the Spirit's message by Paul,—equally, if not of equal importance. The passage from the one to the other is therefore made with no sense of shock; the thought and heart run upon the new lines with perfect smoothness, with the smoothness of entire naturalness, the naturalness of a man to whom any smallest topic connected with his Lord, and His people, and His work, is as really holy ground for thought and talk as any largest and most important topic. Nothing which affects or belongs to Christ or His Church is on a "low level." The whole level is high, though not equally high. "Up" or "down," "higher" or "lower," in any rightful occupations of a Christian man's time, or thought, or tongue, are not so much ascents to some mountain-top and descents to the plain at the base, as variations of level upon the surface of a broad tableland, where all, even the "lower," are high together. Collection or Resurrection, women's veils or the glory of Charity, all are topics of one and the same "higher life." Nothing is finer than the conversation in the family circle of a Christian home, where every life is "in Christ," where everything is judged as by those "in Christ," where nothing is admitted—and it leaves a wide range of topics and pursuits—which cannot find a place within the holy circle traced by the words "in Christ"; the talk passes "from grave to gay," from earnest to hearty fun, from politics to religion, from religion to anything, with the most perfect naturalness and simplicity. All is part of one whole life, whose centre and view-point is located by the side of Christ. The merriment is made holy, and guarded in its outbursts by the sure instinct of a holy heart; the transition from topic to topic is controlled by the supreme direction of all the thought and heart to the glory of Christ. The man in Christ is as really "marching through Immanuel's ground" in this chap. xvi., as when he was in chap. xiii. or chap. xv.

**II. Note the characteristics of the collection and its management.**—1. *Personal gifts are its support.* "*Every one of you.*" No slipping out from doing much or doing anything, because "the whole Church is doing so liberally." No man has been left out of God's blessings; no man may be left out of the Church's giving. The "Unspeakable Gift" was given to him in his poverty; his best gift to the poverty of Jerusalem fellow-Christians is not too large an acklowledgment. Its value will largely be in that it is *his own* gift, with his

own gratitude and thought put into it. The gift has no value except as it means the *man.* And so we have—

2. *His personal thought.* "*In store.*"—Then it is no mere spasm of benevolence; it has been provided for and arranged with purpose. As in Eph. iv. 28, to have something to give in charity and to God is a distinct motive and object in the Christian life. [A remarkable passage. Some Ephesian Christians had been thieves; of such material does Christ make "saints" and build up His Church. Now every Ephesian rogue must be an honest man, if he become a Christian. What motive shall be urged to induce him to take to regular ways, and "to labour, working with his hands the thing that is good"? The dignity of labour? The "better policy" of honesty? The peaceful conscience of the honest man? The misery of the thief? And so on. No. Paul urges this: "Let him work, that he may have something to give away to him that needeth." So then ask, Why should a Christian work to-day? To keep up the home? Yes. To educate the children? Yes. To leave them enough to exempt them, not from the need of real work, but from the paralysing pinch of means so narrow as to leave no margin for contingencies? Yes, perhaps. To have the yearly holiday and an occasional day of recreation? Good objects all. To provide against sickness and old age? Yes. But this also is to be put in as an object co-ordinate in importance with the rest, to have "*a store*" from which there may always be something to give when "need" of any kind demands it.] The "*store*" meant steady, thoughtful, *hearty* preparation to give. As between man and man, a gift brought by the wealthy man who has impulsively walked into the first shop he came to, and has bought the first likely or unlikely thing which caught his eye, "no matter about the price," is worth nothing in comparison with the far humbler gift which has meant a poor but grateful heart, which has considered what will be pleasing or suitable or useful to the receiver, and has secured or made it, with personal trouble and perhaps work or sacrifice. The planning how to have a "*store*" makes the gift one acceptable to God. The most mercenary gift, bestowed with a self-interested purpose, does the same material service to the collection, as Paul gathers and forwards it. But in the subscription lists kept by the Lord Himself, the gift is differently appraised according as it is the mere haphazard, impulsive gift of a hasty, accidentally stirred, good nature, or as it is the carefully treasured "*store,*" got ready for the claim of Christ and His work or His poor, after quiet, conscientious weighing of all other claims and their rightful adjustment to such other and to this. The smaller gift out of a prepared and devoted "store," is better than a far larger one which is a mere chance "dip" into whatever one may happen to have within reach and available. The man and his personal thought are in it. The worth is in these. And the gift which means a deliberate "sacrifice," a distinct deferring of something of one's own, that the claim of God may be met, is the most precious of all. Moreover, it is stored for a special object. A good giver thinks about the destination of his gift, and is interested in the "Jerusalem saints." Also it is—

3. *A thank-offering.*—Because "*the Lord* [or God] *hath prospered him.*" God has enabled him to get; God has enabled him to give; gratitude demands that he should give. And this by no means as a satisfaction in full of God's dues, leaving him free to do as he pleases with all the rest. "Tithe" or "firstfruits," whatever be the system or scale of giving, the part of time, or money, or energy first given to God, does not mean that, *e.g.*, "Sunday is God's; the rest of the week is now my own." Rather the firstfruits, the "Corban," means that we gratefully offer a "sample," where all is God's own; and that we purpose thankfully to employ what He arranges we shall keep and use, only as those who are dealing with what is His. The gift is a thank-offering, the first handful, the earliest

sheaf, of the last week's harvest He has privileged and aided us to gather in. And not only "*because*," but "*as*,"—for

4. *The "store" is accumulated on system;* there is a principle governing the manner of accumulating. The God-given "*prosperity*" not only *supplies the motive*, but *it also fixes the measure*, of the gift. Two ways then present themselves of working this "sliding scale." First: "The Lord is running me shorter; I must cut down my gifts"; and this is done with a promptitude not always shown when the tide of prosperity turns in our favour,—*is* so *turned* by God. Second: "The Lord has not seen fit to give me as much this week, or this year. But He has been very good. I must trust Him a little longer before revising my gifts downwards. I will give the old sum this time, once more; I may never have the power to do it again." Such givers are not imagination, monsters of goodness created by parsons' fancy; but are happily found in all the Churches; often quiet, unostentatious people, in whose quiet life such trustful, grateful excelling of the rigid proportion is the one piece of romantic and heroic. The storing is systematic, not spasmodic or emotion-born, a great "spurt" of unmeasured bounty, when some Paul "*comes*" and urges and persuades a big "*gathering*."

5. *At a regular date and after a regular interval.* "*On the first day of the week.*"—Obviously all these details of injunction to Galatia and Corinth are not so much definite prescription to us to-day, as particular instances, historic examples, which carry a principle. The Sunday morning breakfast table, or the morning service on the first day of the week in the accustomed sanctuary, may be the best time and place for the giving. No day more suitable; not many so suitable. But, as under 4, no "tenth" or any other particular proportion is binding, whilst the proportion should increase faster than even the prosperity increases; so here no day, no particular interval, is matter of obligation. The regularity of the bounty is the important thing; and also that, whether literally joined to the "first day" and its worship, the giving should be made "worship" by its direct, grateful devotion to Christ, in Whom God's good mercy and bounty have most clearly shone forth.

III. **The prudent, business-like administration of this relief fund for Jerusalem.**—(Very fully dealt with under 2 Cor. ix.) What is carefully, thoughtfully collected must be righteously devoted to its proper object; pains taken to secure that it reaches its destination; [not like some fine rivers which lose themselves in an absorbent desert-sand before they can reach their goal, the sea;] administered by trusty hands and wise hearts.

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 5—14.

*Three Contrasts.*

A. "*I will*," . . . "*I do*" (ver. 5), "*I will not*" (ver. 7)—"*It may be*" (ver. 6), "*I trust*," "*If the Lord permit*" (ver. 7).

B. *Timothy—Apollos* (vers. 10-12).

C. "*Be strong*"—"*All . . . with charity*" (vers. 13, 14).

A. *A Christian man's purposing.*

I. **Two minds, two wills, are working together in the ordering of Paul's life.**—A deep, a bottomless, problem of philosophy how this can be. In practice, the devout heart makes no difficulty. The difference between Bible histories and the history of our own times, or our own lives, is not that God is found more actively interposing in them than in ours, but that in them we are taken behind the scenes, so to speak, and permitted to see—where we usually must believe—Him at work. The Bible characters and histories are, as it were, dissected examples,

that we may learn how to think of the ordinary examples, where the beating heart and the complex machinery are all hidden. We are to read them, and to learn how to look for, and to see, God in the newspaper, in the national, the personal, records of to-day. Bible stories, Bible lives, are by no means full of miracle. They are full of God; but not more full of God than are ours. In the Bible we see, in the case of men and in the case of nations, how God and man work together in weaving history on the loom of Time. If we look at the side on which man works at the pattern, it all seems his own, and he seems to work quite after his own mind and will. If we turn the fabric, as we always do in Scripture narrative, and look at the side where God is working upon His own pattern, we see the same events and incidents "showing through." Every one is being woven into God's own design; but they have a different colour and character. How man can work in perfect freedom, and yet God's pattern be also wrought, is a problem which the Bible only "solves," so far as is needful for practical purposes, by showing us in a few specimen cases both sides of the work. Paul brings the will and purpose of Christ still closer to his own when he writes: "I trust *in the Lord*,"—*i.e.* as a man whose whole life and its hopes and plans are not at all independent, but all of them "in the Lord," I trust,—"that I myself shall come . . . shortly" (Phil. ii. 24). Here Paul's plans are not only subject to, but full of, "*the Lord*" Christ's "*permission*." All is Paul; all is Christ.

II. **These facts of revelation and experience emerge:** 1. *Man proposes, God disposes.* If Paul's Master do not arrange for his short stay at Corinth, then, as he once found in those very regions, Paul plans and tries for an opening in vain (Acts xvi. 6-8). There is no reason why Paul should not "propose," no reason why he should not argue that the mind of his Master was that he should "*remain at Ephesus until Pentecost*," drawing his inference from the very facts, that the Lord had "*opened a door*" which claimed to be entered, and that there were "*many adversaries*" being stirred up for the Gospel, whose opposition "needed" that Paul, the captain of the host, should himself be in that part of the fight. Men are most frequently left to learn the plan of God from such circumstances as these. But all needs God. [If, when Benaiah says "Amen," the Lord God of Israel do not say "Amen" too, David appoints Solomon to be king in vain (1 Kings i. 36). Man's "Amen" is "May it be so"; God's "Amen" is "It shall be so."] Paul's plans only succeed when they fall in with Christ's plan. Men strive against God's purposes in vain; without God they strive for their own plan in vain. "Men are architects of their own fortune," *and they are not.* The plans of human builders must "pass His office." If in wilfulness men persist, God willing or unwilling, they find that their edifice has no sure foundation; they can mix no cement for their work which will not crumble into utter weakness. The top stone can never be lifted into its place. If man's will will not take God into its counsels, yet it cannot shut Him out of its work. That work will rise as He "*permits*," and as far as He permits; and when He wills, the whole fabric of man's plan will collapse into utter ruin. [And often the greatest mercy of a man's life that it does!] Napoleon's fall dated from the day when, on his way to Moscow, he turned away from the faithful remonstrance of good Queen Louise of Prussia with his bold defiance of God: "Madam, I propose and I dispose!"

2. *Man should propose.*—As above, no reason why Paul should not make the wisest arrangements, and draw the wisest conclusions, he was able. No man need say, "Whatever I do, God's plan will be carried out; I will, I need, I can, do nothing." Human effort is not so to be paralysed; the noblest natures have their own logic, which sweeps away such Turk-like, indolence-breeding fatalism. They often cannot give or get demonstration; they often cannot detect the

fallacy of the fatalistic reasoning; but the nobler the man, the more certainly he will start up and say, "I must plan; God made me to plan. God help me! Yet He has also made me to help myself; I may hope that He will." Prayerfully, submissively planned work for Christ may look for His blessing of success. [Remark Prov. xvi. 3, "Commit thy *works* unto the Lord, and thy *thoughts* shall be established." *I.e.* what men aimed at in their work shall be surely accomplished, even though perhaps by the frustrating of their own "*works*" altogether.] Christ will "*permit*" Paul's plans; He will guide Paul in planning, so that his plans fall in with, and become part of, Christ's larger plan and government of His Church and of the world.

3. *In humble dependence upon God.*—The *humility* will save from all fretting and chafing when Paul's own plans are "revised" away altogether by the Lord's superior will; and, still more, if it even be something set aside which we thought essential, humility will not simply bow to the inevitable, but will acquiesce in, and embrace, the Higher Will. The *dependence* will give hope and heart, when planning difficult tasks. Not left alone in either our purposes or our execution of them.

> "Thou art not only to perform thy part,
> But also mine; as when the league was writ,
> Thou didst at once Thyself indite
> And hold my hand, while I did write."
>
> —*George Herbert.*

B. *Timothy and Apollos.*—[Much good material in Dean Howson's *Scenes from the Life of St. Paul*, chaps. vii., viii., "The Companions of St. Paul."

I. **Two types of worker and of character; "of worker" because "of character."**—As to Timothy, Howson sums up thus: "All this reveals to us a life of incessant activity and toil, and a character worthy of respect and affection. Not, indeed, that we need suppose that Timotheus was destitute of defects. From the repeated and emphatic injunctions to courage (1 Tim. i. 18, iii. 15, iv. 14, v. 21, vi. 12), it seems not unlikely that there was something of timidity in his disposition [but see Critical Notes on ver. 10], caused, not improbably, in some degree by his delicate health; and it is no unreasonable fancy which ascribes to him a certain softness of character, and, so to speak, a 'feminine piety.' Nor is it likely that this would be any hindrance to the continued and deep attachment which evidently subsisted between him and St. Paul; but rather the contrary. Even in common human friendship the stronger character often finds its consolation in drawing the weaker character close to itself." In contrast with all this,—which must not be overpressed to Timothy's disadvantage; he is a fine fellow,—Apollos does here seem to stand forth an example of something more "masculine." Timothy needs that Paul should throw around his youth and his timidity the strong defence of his own plea for all consideration for him at Corinth; Apollos is a man parallel with Paul, whose judgment and will match themselves against the wish of Paul; whereas Paul's wish is command enough for Timothy, whom he sends. Apollos has a mind of his own, and prefers his own time. Not, however, in the slightest sense as displaying that "independence" which is only pride goading on weakness to assert itself, or from anything but absolute harmony of mind and soul with Paul. The "refusal" to go argues a thorough loyalty to Paul on the part of Apollos. In Paul's absence he had, quite innocently, given a name to a party antagonistic to Paul. For Paul's sake, and for his own fair name's sake, he would stand clear from these men, who, without shadow of warrant, used his name as the badge of their party. His presence at Corinth "*at this time*" seemed to him not advisable; the factious party should have no semblance, or show of sanction, such as might be, wrongfully, based upon his presence in

Corinth just now. Under the circumstances Paul, in desiring to send him again to Corinth, shows how utterly without jealousy Paul was, and how full of generous trust in Apollos himself; whilst Apollos' wish to be excused just now "shows a prudence and self-restraint and delicate consideration for" Paul which argues well for Apollos' character. There is prudence in this "refusal" to set foot in Corinth just at this juncture. Altogether the suggestions of the few incidental remarks we may gather up as to Apollos, show us a very fine man, around whose name it is a great marvel that so few ecclesiastical legends have collected. [That he should be suggested as the writer of the Hebrews rests upon no surer foundation than this: The author's turn of thought, and some occasional grammatical forms, as well as a somewhat rhetorical form about the letter, are said to be characteristically "Alexandrian," and, of all Paul's "school" of disciples, Apollos is the one man we happen to know who, coming from Alexandria, might be supposed to be Alexandrian in thought and style, "eloquent" as he was, and "mighty in the Scriptures."] The practical suggestion is that *Christ has use for every type of man and of mind in His Church.* "Dependent ones" like Timothy, young and perhaps shrinking from conflict and friction, are not by any means useless. They win stronger hearts for themselves and then for their Master. There are many forms of labour, and many styles of "success." The workers of other types, and on other lines, need to be as broad as Paul would have the Corinthians to be in their judgment of Timothy: "*He worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do.*" The men of stronger type find it difficult to appreciate such natures as need, like clinging plants, the strong support of a Paul, or his sheltering, appealing love; difficult not to "*despise*" them, as "poor creatures," "unmanly," and the like. They laugh at the "*fear*" which their own rough handling and rough judging cause, and are apt to crush and kill a tender spirit, intending no harm. The Timothys, when put to it, can be entrusted with difficult and responsible work at Ephesus or elsewhere (1 Tim. i. 3); and acquit themselves well by the grace of God "enabling them" (*ib.* v. 12), as He "enables" the Pauls, to hold their own and do their Master's work, though they must handle older, "grave," men (*ib.* iii. 1-11), and even "unreasonable and wicked," or "blasphemously" heretical ones (2 Thess. iii. 2; 1 Tim. i. 19, 20). The very faculty of winning such tender affection as that which Timothy won and kept from Paul (2 Tim. iv. 9-13, 21) is a very valuable gift to the Christian worker, and opens hearts, and opens doors, where the Paul and the Apollos may not, or not so readily, enter. No shape or temper of tool comes amiss to the hand of the Divine Worker.

II. **Paul revealed in his friendships.**—1. *How broad his sympathies and his nature*, to be able to attach to himself, and to understand and work with, and love, such a diversified group of friends as those we see round him in the Acts and Epistles. He must himself have been a many-sided man, offering many points of attachment, that such different styles of men always found in him a side where they could take hold and "catch on." [May it be reverently suggested that the *polygon* of character, with these many sides, the more in the nobler and larger natures and lives, grows to the perfect circle—the *polygon of an infinite number of sides*—in the One Friend, in whom all men find a place, a side, where they touch and can grasp and can hold?] Men of such pronounced character as Paul sometimes pay the penalty of their very strength, in an utter incapacity to read, or work with, or care for, or be just to, any type but what approaches their own; and in consequence they have few friendships, though these are close and strong, if sometimes undemonstrative, and their life is spent in an isolation of greatness and strength. Paul could be strong enough, and could speak strongly enough (*e.g.* ver. 22); he appreciated strength highly (*e.g.* ver. 13); but he won to himself Lydias and Marys (Rom. xvi. 6) and matrons like Rufus's

mother (*ib.* ver. 13), and clinging natures like Timothy, and strong men like Apollos and Titus. [How like the rugged, yet so lovable Luther!]

2. *A man's friendships bring out his characteristics.*—He is put to the test by his friendships. See whom a man chooses as his friends, see how he keeps them; you see a long way into the man. As we have found, a man is not at all of necessity simply mirrored and reproduced in his friendships; but he is revealed by them. To himself and to others they are a touchstone of character. See, then, how this foremost apostle is tenderly considerate for a young minister who needs encouragement, who should indeed be respected by himself, and by others, as a fellow-worker; who shall not, if he can help it, be treated with anything but respect. *An old minister and his young colleague.* See, as between him and Apollos, how utterly, apostle though he is, he holds aloof from anything like dictation. He claims no right to move men about in the field like so many pieces on a chess-board. He might perhaps have found Timothy acquiescent, if he had attempted to do so; Apollos would, perhaps, have resented it. As a fact, he has no thought of it with either of them. Timothy is "his son" in the Gospel; but in the work they are equals before their common Master. Paul was a wise master-builder before Apollos began to learn from Aquila and Priscilla the rudiments of the Christian "trade"; yet he respects, and bows to, the judgment and will of Apollos, and his own "*great desire*" is waived. How smoothly the work of God progresses when the workers, all round, are of this temper and style!

C. *Strength and love.*—(Cf. under xi. 11, "The Man" and "the Woman.")

I. **Complementary graces.**—1. The verses might almost stand as a summary of the suggestions of B. Say to Timothy, "*Watch; . . . stand fast; . . . be strong.*" Say, perhaps to Apollos, certainly to Corinth, "*All things . . . with charity.*" A good rule is given earlier in the letter: "All . . . decently and in order" (xiv. 40). This is as much better, larger, higher, as "*love*" is higher than "*order.*" Order good; but love will secure, if its working be perfect, all that is really of worth in "order"; the "order" of "love" is natural, necessary, inevitable, and sure. Strength, too, is good; but it needs clothing with love. Speaking architecturally, strength finds the construction in the Church building, love the ornament. Ornament without strength is collapse; "ornament your construction" is perfect art. Strong men! build lovingly; work lovingly; save men lovingly, if you can. [There is an evangelism that is hard. There is benevolence, aid to sickness and poverty, which is unsympathetic, mechanical, hard, and that unintentionally hurts where it means to help.] Loving men! be strong, "*be men*" (ver. 13, literally), be watchful. Ver. 13 is a soldierly verse, a campaigning verse, a verse for warriors. Ver. 14 would Christianise the spirit of Wordsworth's lines:—

> "Who, doomed to go in company with Pain
> And Fear and Bloodshed, miserable train!
> Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
> In face of these doth exercise a power
> Which is our human nature's highest dower;
> Contests them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves,
> Of their bad influence, and their good receives;
> By objects, which might force the soul to abate
> Her feeling, *rendered more compassionate*;
> *Is placable*—because occasions rise
> So often that demand such sacrifice;
> . . . . . .
> . . . . more able to endure,
> As more exposed to suffering and distress;
> Thence, also, *more alive to tenderness.*"
>
> —*The Happy Warrior.*

2. The controversial conflicts of the Church need that the fighting be done "*with charity*," and, after the fight, nothing but "*charity*," though both sides have "*quitted themselves like men*" against each other, "*standing fast in the faith*" as they each have apprehended it, "knowing," all of them (*together*), only "in part" (xiii. 9). But the very "*charity*" must be ready to fight (cf. ver. 22); it must not be so "liberal" as to believe that "nothing is worth disputing about." There are vital issues raised, from time to time; there have been "decisive battles in the history of the" kingdom of Christ; when love without strength would easily have become treasonable indifference.

II. **Complementary counsels** (ver. 13).—1. "*Watch*," "*stand fast*," when there seems no fighting, and even no foe in sight. In the midst of the conflict, in the presence of the foe, "*be strong*," "*play the man*." 2. "*Watchful; steadfast; strong;*" a complete programme for the Christian soldier; [add "*loving*," and it is a complete programme for the Christian life]. 3. **Watchful**; there are many foes; the soldier's peril is to fall asleep; all the camp are on sentry duty; every man, and not official sentries only, is told off to give the alarm of treason, or of subtle or open attack. **Steadfast**; as appreciating the significance of "*The Faith*," the value of that Gospel for a lost world, which is its heart and burden and main content; as yourselves believers of strong faith in "*The Faith*" [which is *a thing believed* and only known or understood by *believers*. Faith is a condition (*sine quâ non*), without which knowledge is necessarily impossible]. Standing fast in days when, as on a memorable Sunday, June 18th, 1815, a line of British squares could do nothing but doggedly hold their ground through the long hours of waiting for Blücher's new help. As Napoleon said of them, "How splendidly they fight; they don't know that they are really beaten!"; so the "*steadfast*" Christian soldiers have many a time tenaciously held to a "*Faith*" which had been discredited by some of its very defenders ["not wise, or worth while, to attempt to sustain that old position"]; themselves have been forsaken by treason or fear; by all rule and reason definitely pronounced "beaten" in the judgment of the assailants; yet doggedly have "unreasonably" kept to their substantial position; until their tenacity has been vindicated and crowned by unexpected reinforcement raised up by their Great Lord, who is Himself "The Faith" and "The Truth"; unlooked-for help has many a time made the long struggle end in victory. All of which has its echoes and analogies in the struggle of the personal life to maintain its ground, *e.g.*, in the workshop, full of sceptical and scoffing workmen, or in the school dormitory, full of teasing, mocking, or angry fellow-students. **Strong**, whether in watching or fighting; in experience and purpose; and (not least) strong because busy (xv. 58). 4. *Watchful* against *subtle* danger; *steadfast* against *persistent* attack; *manly* against "wise" assault; *strong* against many-sided *strength* of evil.

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 15—24.

*Friends and Foes.*

I. **Friends.**—1. Even in Ephesus, and *because* in Ephesus, where there are "*many adversaries*." A day came when Paul, like his Master before His judge, stood friendless, "when no man stood by him," not a Christian in all Rome daring to show himself as a friend of Paul in court that day (2 Tim. iv. 10). Yet he was not forsaken: "The Lord stood by me, and strengthened . . . and delivered." That is the supreme strength and support of a Christian man. But next to that is the "*refreshing of spirit*" when, to a hard-worked toiler in a dangerous post in Ephesus, some Stephanas or Fortunatus or Achaicus "*comes*," bringing letters and tidings and supplies. Others brought ill news and disquieting (i. 11, where, however, see note). Paul's Master is careful that His

servant shall not have all disquiet; these bring "*supplies*." It is good to see a loyal Corinthian face again! [See another instance of God's loving consideration, by way of alleviation and compensation (Phil. ii. 27), "lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow."] What worker for Christ does not recall many such instances, where the coming of friends has been as "cold water to a thirsty soul," or as a "draught from a brook by the wayside" (Ps. cx. 7); a supply and comfort which was only typical of many another up-springing well of comfort in a very desert of isolated experience or labour. The highest service that friendship can be made to render, next to that of leading a soul to seek the Highest Friendship of all.

2. *A new brotherhood is springing up.*—"*Greetings*" fly across the Ægean between Ephesus and Corinth. There are "*Churches in Asia*" who join hands across the water with a Church in Corinth. Aquila and Priscilla have a "*Church in their house*" [as afterward they had in Rome (xvi. 5)], which greets Corinth. Paul "*greets*" Corinth,—Corinth and not merely the party "of Paul." Corinthian is to greet Corinthian "*with a holy kiss*," though one may be a rich man and the other a slave. A new love has been born into the world, which forgets that Aquila is a Pontian Jew and Apollos an Alexandrian Greek, and that Stephanas and his friends are Corinthians. "See how these Christians love another!" See how this Paul loves the Timothy who is "his son in the faith." See how he loves this Stephanas and his household. They were his "*firstfruits*"; in them he first tasted the joy of harvest in the field of "*Achaia*." Christian and Christian, minister and convert, are the closest "kin."

3. *This new brotherhood is an organised thing.*—The friends, the brethren, form themselves into Churches, "*in a house*," "*in Asia*." Of such units of construction "The Church" is being built up; and each unit in its essential feature is a miniature of the Whole; it is "*a Church*" as really as is the whole. Precedence and sequence are beginning to show, as in all human social life. Some are to "*submit*" to others, but it is only for their worth's sake and their work's sake. And their precedence is in service. Beyond most they "*set themselves to minister to the saints*" (R.V.). ["Whosoever would be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matt. xx. 27).] In the Church there should never have been office or precedence which did not mean serviceableness to the welfare of the whole; there should never have been an official whose honour was not rooted in this: "*He helpeth with us, and laboureth.*" There should have been no *fainéants* amongst the Church's exalted names. "*Working helpers*" should be "*acknowledged*," and if needful "*submitted to*." And in the long-run recognition and deference do come naturally to worth and work.

II. **Foes.**—There is but one foe: "he who does *not love the Lord Jesus Christ*." Not love *Him*? Think slowly over His Name and full style: "Jesus"—"Lord"—"Christ." Why in His very name Jew, Gentile, Man, have their share and place. Not love *Him*? The embodiment of all moral Beauty, Truth, Goodness; the True, the Beautiful, the Good, after which the philosophers sought, and of whose interrelations they disputed in endless discussion—they meet in Him; the simplest Christian is no seeker merely, he has "Heureka!" in his mouth, since he got to know "*the Lord Jesus Christ*"! Not love Him? Who has loved us to the death; Who for our sakes became poor with a "Great Renunciation" which is, according to any human standard, by any human calculus, quite an incommensurable quantity. Not love Him? What is the matter with the heart that does not love Him? Is it blind, or deaf, or dead? Can it not see, or know, or love Him? The unloving heart perhaps admires, and says, or sings, or writes, fine words about the Teacher of Nazareth; it may gather up its skirts, with a shrinking that is a reminder from former days of a real faith, or which is only an æsthetic shrinking from "bad form," when

some daring, outspoken man calls "*Jesus*" plainly "*accursed*" (xii. 3); but Paul has no softer, lesser word for the loveless heart itself. Not love Him? "*Anathema*" the loveless one! That seems "unjust"? "You cannot command love?" Certainly; but it can be awakened or suppressed, cultivated or killed, by the man himself. He will cultivate or let it die, as toward Christ, according to the whole moral attitude he takes up. "Mere indifference" to Christ reveals an inner world of moral alienation, and at least a possibility of the very fiercest aversion. Between the man, almost demoniac, who screams, "Jesus is Anathema! Jesus is Anathema!" and the man who perhaps would shrink from saying it outright, but who really feels no interest in, and cares nothing for, Christ, the difference is rather one of possibility, of opportunity, of occasion, of provocation. Press Christ and His claims upon the "merely indifferent" man, and you either lead to submission, trust, love, or you provoke anger at yourself, and dislike, antagonism, hatred to Him. **There is no being neutral in the presence of Christ** and His claim. "*For judgment* he is come into this world;" He is the test of character, the Revealer of hearts, making a swift, sharp discrimination between friends and foes (John ix. 39). There is no trace of a permission to put mere sincerity in the place of correct faith, of separating a man's religion from a correct theology on this topic. No man can help taking sides for or against Him; for better or for worse no man can remain the man he was before, after once being really, clearly, intelligently confronted with Christ. To say nothing of His personal "character"; He makes—as is often urged by Christian controversialists—such claims for Himself; He assumes, as with perfect, simple right, such a position in regard both to God and men; He makes such assertions about Himself as are tanta amount to a claim to be, and to be honoured and accepted as, Divine in the highest, the exact, sense. Presuming His sanity, He leaves no alternative: either He is a blasphemer, and justly "Anathema," or Divine and at once and forthwith to be "honoured *even as* men honour the Father." "He that is not with Me is against Me." Not to be His friend is to be a foe, and necessarily "under the ban." And He "*cometh*"!

III. **Paul's outburst of feeling.**—These last verses (chap. xvi.) have been, as it were, gradually "subsiding" from the often highly wrought interest and feeling of the body of the letter. The thought and tone have accompanied each other, as with the settling of a bird alighting, not suddenly, but in a series of gentle curves, each of which, though rising, ends at a level a little lower than it began, till one expects a quiet gliding in the last to the level ground. But instead there is this sudden dash upward; a volcanic, eruptive outburst of feeling. "Let all be in charity," Paul had just said (ver. 14). What then is this? **It is the Intolerance of Love.** [Often pointed out that the "Apostle of love," John, when a young man, was "Boanerges," who would have called down fire upon the Samaritan village that would give no hospitality to Christ (Luke ix. 54); and that the Boanerges temper is not extinct in the old man of ripest love and piety (1 John iv. 3; 2 John 10). In each case it is to be observed how with John, as with Paul, it is the very intensity of conviction, and of devotion to Christ, which called out the fiery denunciation.] A man cannot be a lukewarm enemy, nor a lukewarm friend, of Jesus Christ. **It is the "Intolerance of the Gospel"** [title of a good sermon by A. Vinet], and throws much light upon the difficult question of the imprecatory psalms. At least it cannot be said without much qualification that they are wholly of an "Old Testament spirit," in strong antithesis to that of the New. [Look, *e.g.*, at 2 Tim. iv. 14, "Lord . . . reward him according to his deeds!" (N.B. reading); Gal. v. 10, "Shall bear his burden"; v. 12, "Circumcision? I would there were an excision; a clean excision of these men from the body of Christ"; hear

Stephen denounce the Sanhedrin (Acts vii. 51, 52), or Paul Bar-jesus (Acts xiii. 10, 11); hear Christ Himself denounce the Pharisees, "Fill ye up the measure of your fathers!" (Matt. xxiii. 32); hear John, "I do not say that he shall pray for it,"—as though he had been brought into such a perfect accord with God's own abhorrence of sin, such a perfect acceptance of the righteousness of the heaviest judgment of God upon it, that he anticipates the day when the saved and the heavenly host shall together stand in holy aloofness from the condemned Harlot-evil of the universe, and, over the very judgments of God, shall solemnly sing an exultant "Alleluia!" (Rev. xix. 1-5).] The New Testament cannot tolerate indifference to Christ or the Truth. No Christian man can leave it an open question whether his Master be "Jesus of Nazareth" or "*Our Lord Jesus Christ.*" It is no question of exactly agreeing about the doctrinal phraseology of a creed; but of a love to the personal Christ, which has sometimes co-existed with an imperfect creed about Him. [*E.g.* Dr Adam Clarke denied the eternity *a parte ante* of His Sonship.] It is not the intellectual rightness of the man which is in issue, but the moral state of the man's heart. The Godhead of Christ is a test question indeed, as men must apply tests; the moral attitude toward Christ, be He what He may, is the deeper thing which stirs Paul's heart. "He may not accept, or *totidem verbis* repeat, my Christology; but does he love my Christ? If not, let him be Anathema." If we are not so outspoken, or so confident in our condemnation, we should inquire whether our devotion to Christ is less intense; whether our convictions are as deep as Paul's; whether truth is of as much certainty and importance to us. Loyalty to Christ may sometimes need to override all considerations of conventional courtesy and "charity" and liberality. (See also Separate Homily under ver. 22.)

*The Benediction.*

The "bird" does "alight," and very quietly! The outburst of ver. 22 is quite compatible with a perfect peace and self-control within Paul's soul. He passes as easily from it to these words of tender farewell, as he did from the Resurrection to the Collection (above). "His grace, my first and greatest wish for you at Corinth. My love, less, but not less real, with you also; and I wish it not with the mere good feeling of a benevolent heart; I wish it '*in Christ Jesus.*'" Paul's heart is full of Christ's heart; to him "to live," and so to greet his Churches, "is **Christ**."

## *SEPARATE HOMILIES.*

Ver. 9. *An Opened Door.*

**I. Figure obvious enough in meaning.**—Very curious accident that the phrase and the figure are always connected with this same Proconsular Asia. 1. In Rev. iii. 8 "*an open door*" is "*set before*" the Philadelphian Church. Persecution, poverty—whatever has *shut up* Philadelphian Church into a narrow field of life, are removed. There is *escape from confinement* in the figure. Whatever has shut them out from access to their heathen neighbourhood around is removed. There is *entrance into a new sphere.* Circumstances now favour. They are to go in and take possession, in His name Who has opened the door. 2. On Paul's second missionary journey, it is said (Acts xvi. 6-12) that, having passed through the central tableland of Galatia, and having come down to the coast, somewhat north of this Ephesus, he wished to open his commission in this Roman "*Asia.*" The Director of his course, however—the Holy Spirit—in some way forbade him. That door was shut. He turned away north-east, and "assayed to go into Bithynia." But no! "The Spirit suffered him not." The door is closed in that direction also. His path into

new fields of labour lay another way, and he turned aside to Troas and waited. Then the way became clear. The door, the way, opened into Macedonia; into a Europe waiting for the Gospel.

II. In all such cases of providential leading it is to be remembered that **the closed door is as really a part of God's leading as the opened one.**—1. It is *a real temptation*—though there is an honourable side to the feeling—to a soul full of devotion to Christ, eager to put the fervour of devotion into concrete shape in some new activity in His cause; full also of sympathy and compassion for the souls and bodies of men and women for whom as yet Christ seems to have died in vain, and with a holy inventiveness and organising gift, ever fertile in new plans for doing something fresh for these souls and for Christ; *to chafe* when these plans are again and again put aside by insuperable difficulties, or when circumstances repeatedly make a hopeful commencement hopelessly abortive in its conclusion. To stand and see work that wants doing, souls that want saving, a world that needs Christ's Gospel, and to be powerless to do anything; [to stand upon the shore and see the poor fellows drop off, one after another, from the frozen rigging of the wrecked vessel into the surging waves; no open door of escape for them, and no open door of help for those who stand and watch, because there is no boat or rescue apparatus; to stand in powerless idleness and watch the burning house; or the like illustration;] is a sharp trial to an eager, devoted, capable Christian worker. No doubt many an obstacle may be removed which at first seems insuperable. *Prayer, tact, patience, work, will generally open a door.* But not always. Asia and Bithynia are closed even to the eager heart of a Paul. *For that journey.* Now "Asia," Ephesus, is open. Then Philippi, Berœa, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth,—all needed him first. Christ had a larger plan of campaign than even Paul saw in Acts xvi. *The closed door* was just then the will of Paul's Lord.

2. *To grasp this will keep the spirit of the eager, devoted worker in peace.*—Look at Phil. i. 12-18, 21. To a man like Paul, for years the forefront evangelist of the Christian Church, and of a zeal burning, as steadily as intensely, beyond that of most, it must have been no small trial to have been, for two years at least, in confinement in Rome, "reduced to" writing letters to friends and Churches, to conversation and discussion with "callers" and inquirers; to know, moreover, that the closing of the door upon himself was being eagerly made the opportunity of teachers who "preached Christ" indeed, but in a presentation which was not "*his* Gospel" (2 Tim. ii. 8; Rom. ii. 16), and which he regarded as "the word of God adulterated" (2 Cor. ii. 17); to remember also that this eager and quickened activity of theirs was in a large degree prompted by no kindly feeling towards himself, but rather was triumphing in having a clear field with him out of the way [every "dog" (iii. 2) of them hoping that his bark would irritate the caged lion, behind his closed door]. Yet he is not irritated. If the door close for him, and open for them,—well, any way men are hearing of Christ who would not otherwise hear of Him at all. "I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice!" And as to any personal irritation, where should that come in? "To me to live is—not Paul but—Christ." *Paul is kept patient within a closed door.*

3. *There are closed doors in the personal life.*—Most perplexing to the understanding; most trying to faith. Every step of the path has been committed to God's guiding wisdom and love; not a step without prayerful "consultation" with the Father. The way seems to clear. Door after door opens until—one stands closed. Indeed, it looks as if there were no door at all, to be closed or opened. The way that seemed so clear has ended in an *impasse*, a *cul de sac*. There appears

nothing to be done except to retrace some steps, or many, and try down some other path. But what then of all the lost time? What of all the "lost" prayer? What of all the way that seemed so clearly opened up to the last point? The full answer can many a time never be given; but the triumph of faith is to hold doggedly to the conviction that God even in such a case has made no false move nor permitted a false start, but rather that He has some larger plan into which this journey down a by-lane that leads to nowhere, enters as a needful and wise detail. [We were perhaps "shunted on to a siding" whilst danger passed, or whilst some arrangements for our after-journey were being made, on what is after all the main line of His system for our life.] *The closed door has many* and many-sided *purposes* in God's plan, and in men's training. Sometimes the development of the after-path justifies the doggedly tenacious faith which, by grace, "would not" doubt. *Men* see and *praise God* by-and-by *for many a closed door.*

III. **The open door is**: 1. A **mercy** to be thankful for; 2. A **call** to be responded to; 3. A **responsibility** to be assumed in Divine strength.

1. **A mercy** not only to the world or to the neighbourhood waiting to be evangelised, sitting in darkness and hunger waiting for the Light and the Bread, but also **to the Church itself and its workers**, for the sake of the effect upon their own life. No greater calamity could happen to a Church, or to a worker, than that they should settle down into easy contentment with what has been already accomplished, not attempting to do more than retain ground already—perhaps by a more eager generation in the past—won and cultivated. Such satisfaction is next door to stagnation. Such stagnation is next door to death. Let a Church, or the individual, lose the spirit of enterprise, the *élan* which carries them forward, exploring for new "*opened doors*"; let (*per impossibile*) the Head of the Church open none, or entrust them with none; the end of that Church would not be far off. O. W. Holmes lays his hand on a true trait of genius,—"it is always breaking out in fresh places." The Church could have no greater calamity happening to it than that it should have no inner impulse with a sanctified "genius" to break out in fresh places, or should be condemned to beat in vain against closed doors in every direction. For *not only* are the habit and spirit of *enterprise* kept alive by open doors, *but hope.* It is easy, fatally easy, for Israel with an evil contentment to build its own city, under the very walls of a Jerusalem held by Jebusites into whose fastness there seemed no open door, and which seemed to leave no hope of its being captured for God. An open door keeps alive that hopefulness of spirit without which no great things will ever be accomplished for the work of God. Quite obvious to add that the Church which has been praying and waiting for an opened door, praises its Great Head with all fulness of thanksgiving, when at last, and perhaps suddenly, "*the door is opened.*"

2. *A call to enter.*—(1) "Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we be still and take it not out of the hand of Syria?" Ahab's spirit of enterprise may be serviceably pondered. "Ephesus is ours! Ephesus is Christ's! It is in the hands of His enemies! The door is opened! The opening is a call!" Some morning the ice, which for weary months has shut in as with the grip of death the vessel of the Arctic explorers, is seen to be stirring and heaving and splitting with the swell of a warmer current or the first touch of the returning summer. How in an instant orders are given to make ready to push into the opening channel through the enclosing ice-floes! The occupations, work or play, which have beguiled the long weeks and the continuous night of the Arctic winter, are thrust aside. *The opened door through the ice is a call.* [Queen Elizabeth once kept Raleigh dallying about her at Greenwich, until one morning the

wind, for which in part he had been waiting, to carry him out of the Thames, turned down stream. The Queen would have kept him for another day. "Madam, the breeze commands me away!" *The opened door* into the wide sea and the wide world, *was an imperative call* to set sail and go.] (2) *Christ calls by opened doors.* It is the most frequent fashion in which to-day His voice is made to reach His Church. It is not to be denied that special guidance is sometimes *directly* given, by the visions of "men of Macedonia," for example. The success has now and again vindicated the leading of a *dream* that showed "*an open door.*" Some who have lived in special nearness to God, and in close touch with His Spirit's least intimations, have proved to be rightly guided by *strong impressions* that doors were opening. [Paul's experiences in Acts xvi. 6-8 would be more definite and decisive than these.] But, ordinarily, the sanctified good sense and the consecrated judgment must co-operate with the look of circumstances, to discover the will and way of Christ. And "*the door*" which commends itself as "*opened*" to the sound, sanctified judgment; the circumstances which look so promising and so probably right;—in these the Lord of the Church will ordinarily indicate His will, and through these utter His "call." [When Saul left Samuel, three special foreannounced signs should be given him, tokens to assure him that so far he was in the way of God for his life. But after that, no more signs, no more special, miraculously announced tokens for guidance. His own sense and the opening of events were to be his guidance: "Do thou *as occasion serveth* thee; for God is with thee" (1 Sam. x. 7).] "*Occasion,*" as Samuel called it; the "*opened door,*" as Paul calls it,—these are generally the voice and call of God.

3. *A responsibility to be assumed.*—(1) From the "*opened door*" at Ephesus, Paul could not, dared not, turn away, even to push forward to Corinth or Jerusalem. He was urgently wanted there, no doubt, but he was wanted at Ephesus. It was at Ephesus where "*the door was opened.*" Ephesus was his immediate responsibility. "To do one thing at a time" is an old and true recipe for accomplishing great things, great at least in amount, in a busy life. To attempt one, whilst harassed by the "claims" of two or a dozen others, is ruin to all steady application, or thoroughness of labour, or peace of heart; and without these the thing in hand is only half done or ill done. Do "open doors," do the claims of opportunities, in the deepest truth of the matter, ever compete? To the man who is going forward, doing "what his hand *finds to do*," the nearest first, then the next, and the next, do claims ever really "clash"? The Christian man, or the Church, is responsible only for the door opened (as Paul says) "to *me*"; the door which is next him. No need to be harassed, diverted, divided, flurried, distressed, about other open doors, however urgently clamorous may seem their claims. The Lord "*who openeth*" (Rev. iii. 7) "*doors*" will care for those. The man, the Church, for whom each of these is opened, is standing near it, with the same responsibility for entering through his own. (2) This *responsibility for one's own* "*door*" is to be remembered. Thankful that one need only be concerned with that, yet mindful that one ought to be concerned with that. The worker, the work, the door between them closed; then, the door opens. Paul's argument with himself was, "assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us, for to preach the Gospel unto them" (Acts xvi. 10). And we might emphasise "us"; "*us*, and no other workers." There is an argument, a call, a responsibility, upon the man before whom "the door opens." He may not shirk it in indolence, or fear; nor may he in a diffidence of himself which logically would issue in charging the Lord of the Workers with having chosen the wrong man, or, at least, not the best, seek to find

somebody "better fitted than" himself to enter in and do the work. He has it to do. He can do it; he can be "made able" (2 Cor. iii. 6). (3) *In dependence upon Divine equipment and aid.* There is fighting to be done inside the door: "*Many adversaries.*" [Yet "shall such a man as" Paul "flee"? (Neh. vi. 11). No; indeed, it is to him an added reason for staying longer at Ephesus. The captain must be found where the fight is thickest. He has had his taste of it already, like a man "fighting wild beasts" in the arena (xv. 32).] All entering in to open doors is with something of difficulty, something of danger. Jabez asks that his "coast" may be "enlarged"; but enlargement to an early settler in Canaan in his days meant dispossessing Canaanite occupiers by war. "Oh that Thou wouldst keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me!" (1 Chron. iv. 10). Never yet was an opportunity utilised without hard work. And the best workers best know their own insufficiency. Look within, and who will enter an opened door? Look up, and who may not? "Let us go up at once, and possess, . . . for we are well able; . . . the Lord is with us; fear them not" (Num. xiii. 30, xiv. 9). "But who goeth a warfare," or entereth an open door, "at his own charges?" (ix. 7). The call puts responsibility upon the man; *but it gives him a claim upon God.* He Who calls, and Who opens the door, knows Who must "find the wherewithal," if the opening is to be entered and the work to be taken in hand. He knows that He will need to "see the workers through" with it. It is upon that understanding, upon that assumption, that He calls by the "*opened door.*" He calls those "who have no might," absolutely none at all of their own, that in them He may, as He must, "increase strength" and wisdom (Isa. xl. 29). "Suppose I enter the door, what next? And if the work develop upon my hands, what then? Perhaps I may break down, or may be so placed that I really am at the end of my resources, and at my wits' end; how then?" "Go in at the open door. Leave the rest. Be thankful for the pioneer's honour put upon you. Let the Master supply all the need of the '*next*' and the '*then.*'"

Ver. 9. *A Great Door and Effectual; Many Adversaries.*—[Many occasions in the personal life of the Christian man when these words rush into his memory as exactly descriptive of his case and its conditions. No mere "happy adaptation" of language this; a real, closely connected analogy. The extension and establishment of the kingdom of God within the individual run on lines perfectly parallel with those which are its characteristics in the case of the world. In the Johannean (and Pauline) sense, there is a little "world" within the man which is part of that larger "world" outside, which has its "Prince" (John xvi. 11), etc., who, whether within or without, is to be "judged and cast out" by the holy encroachment of the power of the kingdom of light. In both campaigns, in both fields,—the world-wide and racial, or the narrower and individual,—there are crises of opportunity for advance and growth and victory and extension, "*opened doors,*" to enter into which, however, means the arousing and the opposition of "*many adversaries.*" Every Christian understands how, beneath the happy appropriateness of the language to his case, there is a real analogy, a real unity, of fact. Taking them in the personal, narrower application, let it remind of the "opened doors" of removed hindrance, of favouring circumstances, of inviting opportunity, for occupying some new ground in the heritage of God's new Israel, **holiness.**]

I. **The privilege of being brought up to an opened door.**—1. Recall days when, with all the suddenness of a revelation, or the opening of a door in a blank wall, and with unusual depth of impression, the desirability, and necessity, of higher religious attainment, of closer walk with God, stand

clear before the vision of the heart. Like Moses, led up to where the whole Canaan of God's "rest for His people" (Heb. iii., iv.) lay spread out attractively before the eyes, possibilities of blessing and holiness stretching away in "length and breadth" (Eph. iii. 18), as never before seen; unlike Moses, led up to see a land waiting for conquest and occupation. Or it is rather the "*opened door*" of the "banqueting house" (Cant. ii. 4), on whose table are spread in tempting array the "feast of fat things," etc. (Isa. xxv. 6), for the children of God's family; the Christian is led up to the threshold and is bidden enter and sit down and "taste as well as see" (Ps. xxxiv. 8). At such times the very presence of sinful tempers and inclinations becomes unusually painful; themselves become unusually hateful; the standard higher than ever; holiness, full and perfect, more desirable than ever. 2. *A privilege*; for no man seeks more grace with any heartiness or hope, merely because he ought; driven to an "opened door" by a sense of duty. He who is led up to it by a quickened desire, is not far from entrance and possession of what lies within. God is in the quickening of desire; the quickening is therefore a pledge of further blessing. A privilege, *and a mercy*, remembering how often, led thus far, the soul has turned away from the door and the feast in half indifference, saying great things of the feast and of the bounty of the Provider, but not caring enough about it to enter and partake; till the quickened desire, imperfect as it was, died away. A mercy, remembering how eagerly other things are pursued, other open doors are entered, until Divine things, thus dishonoured and disregarded, are crowded out of thought and heart. It is favour worthy of His love when by an "*opened door*" attention is again arrested, desire revived, hope excited. 3. *No greater calamity* could occur *than a fatal satisfaction* with present religious position and *status*; no sorer curse from the "grieved" Spirit of God than that the heart should be suffered to lower the standard into adjustment to the facts, or should never catch sight of a larger life inviting the soul through the "opened door."

II. **The responsibility for entering thus created.**—1. Privilege and responsibility always go together. To accept the privilege means to accept and fulfil all that belongs to it. Fulfil no conditions, discharge no responsibility, forfeit all privilege! "A man will not work? Then neither shall he eat!" (2 Thess. iii. 10). (As true of the secular life as of the spiritual.) Do nothing for God; get nothing from God! But the responsibility may be faced cheerfully. Three things always linked together: a promise; a call to seek for its fulfilment; a further promise of grace to obey the call. The door shall always be an "*effectual door*" to the man who endeavours to enter. 2. *There is the responsibility of an indebtedness to Christ.* When you have been contriving and saving and denying yourself, and giving time and labour and money to procure a present for one you love; if it is received with profusely worded, but evidently formal, thanks, if it is never used, but put away, only to be now and then decently taken out and 'admired' and your 'great kindness' again extolled; do you like it? What did it cost Christ to secure for you the possibilities which offer themselves through the "*door*" which "*opened*" so suddenly, so invitingly, as you were reading, or meditating, or were on your knees? *Ought* you not to enter? 3. If, then, the Spirit of God shows some new and higher standard of Christian living, spreads out some new breadth of Christian privilege, bringing it near, laying its desirableness upon the heart, filling with desire for it; that is "*an opened door*" into which it is a *duty and responsibility* to enter and labour, or fight, or enjoy. "If ye *know* . . . , happy . . . if ye *do*" (John xiii. 17). Heavy the responsibility of all new knowledge, if ye "do" not! Indeed, heavy the condemnation of "*an opened door*" refused; the blood ceases to

cleanse from guilt, if we walk not in all the light—much or little—that we have (1 John i. 7).

III. **Many adversaries.**—1. The Self desires, *and does not desire*, to enter. [Said "Rabbi" Duncan: "When C. Malan said to me, on a never-to-be-forgotten day, 'You have got God's word in your mouth,' I felt as if a flash of spiritual electricity had then passed through me. But the old nature asserted itself right in the face of that word, and refused for a while to receive the death-wound. . . . Now that must not be an infrequent experience. The shock when all that is within rises up and refuses to be slain by the only bloodless Conqueror, till at length the soul yields, and dies that it may live. . . . I was conscious of *a revulsion against my renovation*" (*Colloquia Peripatetica*, 77). The form of illustration is different, but the truth is the same, viz.] the man's indolent, easy-going, self-loving, sin-loving, man-fearing self is the first great "*adversary*" and hindrance to his entering Christ's "*opened door*." 2. Sometimes there are conditions to be fulfilled which seem arrayed as "*adversaries*," because the indolent, or reluctant, or unbelieving heart makes them difficulties. God can only forgive, ready as He is (Neh. ix. 17), upon conditions; man's heart is not ready to fulfil the conditions. The "*opened door*" is, in God's desire and intention, to be entered *at once*; but, on man's part, much must often be done, something laid aside or given up; and the natural heart creates a difficulty, makes itself an "*adversary*." 3. The adversaries will sometimes be literal human opponents. To enter into, and possess, and exhibit the living enjoyment of, a larger, broader, brighter, undoubting, victorious Christian life, will arouse to scorn or displeasure or harassing controversy many average or *minimum* Christians, of whom such a life is by its inevitable comparison an implicit condemnation. The Great Adversary of the kingdom of God will not willingly see, not only a soul escaping into liberty through "*an opened door*," but a soul passing into a larger liberty and fulness of life through "*an opened door*" of opportunity and promise and hope.

Ver. 22, connected with 2 Ep. i. 20, viii. 9, ix. 15, may be made the occasion of a sermon on *Undesigned Illustrations of "To me to live is Christ."*

I. (2 Cor. i. 20.) Paul had not kept to the route announced in the First Epistle—to Macedonia *viâ* Corinth. He had gone by the direct, shorter road, *viâ* Troas. The factious party seized upon this change of route. Said they to the loyal ones: "See this Paul of yours! What dependence on his word? He promises and fails; says he will come and does not." Others, with more malice: "He wrote a very bold letter, and was going to follow it up with a visit; but your valorous apostle *dares* not come to Corinth." This chapter very largely his indignant protest, his defence of his character and conduct. He appeals to his conscience whether all his conduct amongst them was not "in simplicity and godly sincerity." He calls the True God to witness that he was never amongst them a "Yes and No" man, saying and unsaying in a breath, affirming one day, the next denying what he had affirmed, wavering in his own mind between "Yea" and "Nay." If he had changed his plan, it was for good and sufficient reasons. But this vindicating of himself was uncongenial work. To him to live was not Paul, but **Christ**. His character as a man is to him only a matter of importance as it affected his character as a preacher of Christ's Gospel. Every word in his preaching was "Yea." He was no man to preach doubts or hints of doubt, or to give to his readers opinions crudely formed or loosely held. And then his thought by instinct rises to and rests in his Lord, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; Himself the great Promise and the great Ratification of all promises besides.

This grand outburst in the midst of all this personal vindication, is a digression, a parenthesis; but he cannot help putting it in. Self-vindication is irksome. Christ exaltation is ever welcome. A word of it relieves him before he resumes the personal talk. *To him "to live is Christ."*

II. (2 Cor. viii. 9.) Paul puts the Corinthians on their mettle, and tries to shame them into diligence. He has been telling all the Churches, up and down: "Achaia was ready a year ago." With their zeal he has been calling out the zeal and generosity of many. He begs that they will not shame his boasting when the Macedonian (and other) delegates come with him to Corinth. Macedonia is a model to them, giving even "beyond their power." Surely Corinth will not be behindhand. *And with appeals to such motives many* would have stopped. Not so this man; to him "to live is Christ," and to him *the* motive to plead is, "Ye know the grace," etc. In the next verse he is back again to the Fund. But the parenthetic insertion is significant as to this man's habit of heart. He gladly escapes away from the Fund and laggard Church benevolence into a world of everlasting, world-concerning truth, and to his best-loved theme—his Lord who became a beggar to make him eternally rich.

III. (2 Cor. ix. 15.) With startling abruptness he breaks out: "Thanks be unto God," etc. The chapter has been full of small details about the Fund, and his plans, and the movements of Titus. What has this outburst to do with the collection? Nothing. *Everything.* He sits dictating his letter.. In the pauses, whilst the writer is doing his part, Paul's mind goes off upon a well-known path. Every thought of this benevolence of saints to saints is pregnant to him with suggestion of a greater benevolence. He cannot think of these gifts of Church to Church without his thoughts flying off to the ever-welcome topic, God's Gift to sinners. There is bounty! There is the root and the rule of all kindness between Christian and Christian! And as the amanuensis is finishing the last words dictated, his friend and teacher breaks out, "Thanks be to God for," etc. For twenty years he had been studying Christ from all sides: the love that did not spare even Him; the grace of the Son which resigned such native dignity and glory; the misery, here and hereafter, of an unredeemed world; the eternally growing blessing flowing from the work of Christ. The twenty years of pondering express their result in one word; they are condensed into this "irrelevant," parenthetic cry: "Unspeakable! Unspeakable! God's unspeakable Gift! Thank God for Christ!"

IV. (Here 1 Cor. xvi. 22.) He is in Ephesus, getting his letter off. He takes pen in hand to add the authenticating autograph sentence. Usually it is a benediction. In this letter all sorts of topics have been discussed: the resurrection and the collection, the Lord's Supper and the women's hair,—grand themes of eternal importance, and mere regulations no longer concerning men except in the underlying principles of which they are particular, passing embodiments. And now the letter is finished. What shall he add "with his own hand"? What he does add is: "If any man . . . Anathema!" There is apparently nothing to suggest it. But Christ never needs "suggesting" to Paul. To him "to live is Christ." Within him is a heart of burning love for Christ. The fire breaks out here with eruptive force, but it is always burning. He loves Christ. Who would not? Not love Christ! Not love the Christ he loves! "Accursed be the man who does not love my Christ!" It is the intolerance of devoted love. This spontaneous, irrelevant, fierce exclamation is consummate proof that this man, Paul, has only one love, one thought, one object in life. To him to live is *Christ*, CHRIST, CHRIST!—*H. J. F. From article in "Homiletical Magazine," Jan.* 1883 (*condensed*).

# II. CORINTHIANS.

## CHAPTER I.

### *CRITICAL NOTES.*

Ver. 1. **Timothy.**—"Not later (see 1 Cor. iv. 17) and perhaps rather earlier than he wrote the First Epistle, Paul sent (Acts xix. 22) Timothy to Macedonia, with instructions to go on to Corinth if he could, of which, however (1 Cor. xvi. 10), Paul was uncertain. We now find Timothy with Paul in Macedonia. But Paul's anxiety (ii. 13, vii. 5) makes us quite certain that, before his own arrival in Macedonia and his meeting with Titus, Timothy had not brought him tidings about the reception of the First Epistle by the Church at Corinth. Now the warmth of the Second Epistle suggests that it was written very soon after the arrival of Titus; and its silence about the coming of Timothy makes it unlikely that he arrived from Corinth with Titus or between the arrival of Titus and the writing of this letter. Consequently, either, contrary to Paul's expectation, Timothy arrived at and left Corinth before the First Epistle, or he was, for reasons unknown to us but easily conceivable, unable to go there. In either case, we have no certain indication whether Timothy remained in Macedonia till Paul's arrival, or returned to Paul before he left Ephesus, was with him there during the tumult, and went with him to Troas and to Macedonia. But this latter supposition would more easily account for the absence (except i. 19) of any further reference to Timothy in this Epistle. Doubtless he was with Paul when Titus arrived. And his close connection with the founding of the Church at Corinth (i. 19; Acts xviii. 5) accounts sufficiently for the presence of his name here, supporting the Apostle's earnest pleading." (Beet.) Notice margin, "*the brother.*" **Achaia.**—Not the whole Roman province, but the smaller, classical Achaia. Of the former, not Stephanas (1 Cor xvi. 15), but Dionysius and Damaris and others (Acts xvii. 34) were the "firstfruits." Notice the evidence of a widespread work beyond Corinth (cf. 1 Thess. i. 7, 8).

Ver. 3.—John calls the Son a "Comforter" (1 John ii. 1). Christ calls the Spirit a "Comforter" (John xiv. 16, "another" also implying that He Himself had been such to the disciples). Here Paul calls the *Father a* "*Comforter.*" Notice how "*comfort*" runs through vers. 3-7 (disguised as "*consolation*" in A.V.); parallel to the repeated "*affliction*" (same in original as "*tribulation,*" "*trouble*"). **Mercies.**—Also Rom. xii. 1; Phil. ii. 1; Col. iii. 12; Heb. x. 28.

Ver. 5.—Notice the contrasted "*of*" and "*through.*" As to "*of,*" see iv. 10; Heb. xiii. 13; Phil. iii. 10; Col. i. 24; Mark x. 38; (Matt. x. 40; Acts ix. 4). (Also Homily on 1 Cor. xii. 27.) Notice "*unto us,*" not "*in*"; *external* trouble mainly.

Ver. 6.—Then Paul is no such masterful, self-seeking, worthless man as some at Corinth would represent (cf. ver. 24). His "*afflictions*" as well as the "*comfort*" are (not strictly "*vicarious,*" but) directly, and in the intention of God, for the Corinthians' sake,—"*on behalf of your,*" etc. **Is effectual.**—*I.e.* the "comfort" works out with practical effect in . . . (*patient*) **enduring.**—Good expository use and example of the word, and the thing, "*patience*" as exhibited in New Testament; there being always, and here, an element of *fortitude* in the patience.

Ver. 7. **Stedfast, knowing, etc.**—*Q.d.* "I speak hopefully, as a man who has tried it, and who knows what to expect for you."

Ver. 8.—No certainty as to the "*affliction*" referred to, whether some outward persecution at Ephesus (query at Ephesus at all ?) known to his readers (query that of Rom. xvi. 4; cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 9) ("*brethren*"), or such acute distress about the state of things at Corinth as nearly killed him, and at any rate utterly broke down his health and threatened to interrupt his work. [How little the Acts tell of the life of Paul; cf. chaps. iv., xi., vii. 5.] Notice R.V., "*were weighed down exceedingly,*" closely parallel to the original of iv. 17.

Ver. 9.—Little to choose between "*answer*" and "*sentence.*" [In A.V. and R.V. text and margin change places.] "We ask ourselves 'Shall this end in life or in death?' Our '*answer,*' our '*sentence*' upon ourselves, is 'Death.'" "If we live, it will be a real *resurrection* by the power of God." Cf. "I die daily" (1 Cor. xv. 31).

Ver. 10.—Notice in R.V., "*will deliver*," variant reading for "*doth deliver*." If this be accepted, then the latter clause only reiterates "*will*" with an expression of strong "*hope*." The nature of the "*deliverance*" is as uncertain to us as is that of the peril. "*From*" is almost, "*out of the hand of*."

Ver. 11.—Cf. for the thought Phil. i. 19. See the Corinthians working *with* and *for* Paul. **Gift.**—*I.e.* the "*deliverance*" primarily, but not excluding the "*comfort*," or the "*trust*" (ver. 9), which had sustained him until deliverance came; and all is "*grace*," a real "*charism*." **Persons.**—Perhaps too technical a translation of what literally means "*faces*"; as if we saw a whole company with uplifted eyes and hands, and upturned faces, interceding for Paul. Also iv. 15, ix. 12 are parallel in thought.

Ver. 12. **Rejoicing.**—R.V. stronger and more correct. Cognate word in Rom. v. 2, 3, 11, where notice the varying translation; an exultant, sometimes defiantly exultant, joy. The "*rejoicing*" looks not backward to ver. 17, but forward to the "*testimony*," etc., which occasions it. **For.**—*Q.d.* "You will thus pray, and give thanks, for us; we are not yet estranged; I have done, so far as I know, nothing on my part to estrange us." Notice "*holiness*," by a better reading; and "*sincerity of God*," by a more literal translation; *i.e.* no sincerity of any innate goodness of character, but such sincerity as is the gift and work "*of God*." "Unfolded, *open*, patent motive; *pure* and holy simplicity of motive; *transparent* sincerity of motive," the three illustrations. **Fleshly.**—See 1 Cor. iii. 1, where, however, the reading is discredited. **In . . . in.**—For "*with*" and "*by*"; by a more exact translation and exposition of Paul's thought of the contrasted life elements in which conduct might be rooted, and from which it might derive its inspirations and strength. **Conversation.**—In the wide sense of "*conduct*"; "If we so bore ourselves to any Church, much more did we to you at Corinth, although we be so misunderstood and misrepresented amongst you."

Ver. 13.—"There is no double sense, no under-thought, no *arrière pensée*, in either what I write, or what you read in the words. What you yourselves know or by my letters and speech may know, of the writer;—that is all."

Ver. 14. **Glorying.**—*I.e.* the *matter* of "glorying"; in ver. 12, the *act*. "You were once proud of us, as you knew us; at least, '*part*' of you were; you will have as good reason to be proud of us, to the end, I hope [cf. 1 Cor. xiii. 12]; we were your boast, as you are ours." No insincerity in such words of praise. They were true, and there was good reason that they should be true.

Vers. 15, 16. **In this confidence.**—"I had no reason to fear to come, as some fancy and allege, when I changed my plan." The *change of plan* referred to in 1 Cor. xvi. 6, 7. "*Before*" going to Macedonia, instead of to Corinth *viâ* Macedonia. In his original plan he had intended to *return* to Corinth from Macedonia, thus giving them a "*second*" visit, a "second grace" ("*benefit*"). As a fact, therefore, they had what was to have been the "*second*," without having had the "first." The "*journey to Judæa*" was in Paul's mind in Acts xix. 21, and, in spite of the passing uncertainty mentioned in 1 Cor. xvi. 6, it was accomplished, Acts xxi. 15.

Ver. 17. **Flesh.**—Cf. "*fleshly wisdom*," ver. 12. "Was I a 'Yes' and 'No' man? Not knowing my own mind, or not keeping to my decisions, when I thought I did know it."

Ver. 18.—The personal matter is of importance, because the character of the messenger may involve that of the message. "It was not a 'Yes' and 'No' Gospel."

Ver. 19.—Observe the accumulated names of Christ. No "Yes" and "No" Christ either! (Cf. xi. 10.) **Silvanus.**—The "*Silas*" of the Acts. Trace him in Acts xv. 22, 27, 32, 34, 40, xvi. 19, 25, etc., xvii. 4, 10, 14, xviii. 5. (Cf. 1 Thess i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1.) Then he suddenly disappears from the Acts and Epistles, unless he be intended in 1 Pet. v. 12.

Ver. 20.—See Separate Homily. R.V. gives well the corrected readings here and exact translation. **Through us.**—By whose instrumentality all this is proclaimed to men.

Ver. 21.—Notice the margin "*into*" for "*in* Christ." The process of uniting which ends in union with, and life "*in*, Christ" is made prominent and, so to speak, visible. Cf. Eph. i. 13, 14. Prefer the text of A.V. and R.V. to the margin of the R.V. These are not, even in the order of thinking, respectively antecedent and consequent blessings, but one blessing, one gift of the Spirit, under two aspects.

Ver. 23.—Chap. ii. should begin here; no break after ver. 24. Notice that the principle of a judicial oath is here, as in Matt. xxvi. 63, 64; as bearing upon Matt. v. 34. Notice "*witness*" for "*record*" in R.V. **To spare you.**—*Q.d.* the penalties he must have inflicted if he had come and been witness of their flagrant offences against Church order and even morality. What an implied power lies behind this restraint! (1 Cor. iv. 21). So he felt, and hastens to guard this claim to authority and to power to punish, against misconception and misrepresentation.

Ver. 24. **Dominion.**—For the (original) word, cf. 1 Pet. v. 2, and for the thought Mark x. 42. **Faith.**—*Q.d.* the personal life of which faith is the characteristic (they are *believers* if they are Christians at all), and the great foundation secret. No question

of their "creed" here. Not "*lords*" over, but "*helpers*" with, that their life might be made bright with "*joy*" (an object worth aiming at in itself). **By faith ye stand.**—Not, as used here, a general maxim, one of the axioms of the Gospel, but a statement of fact in regard to the Corinthians. *I.e.* the emphasis is not upon "*faith*," but upon "*stand*"; not, "It is by *faith* that you win and keep your *status*," but, "Imperfect as you are, yet you are still so far believers that you do keep your standing in Christ." *Q.d.* (also) "We cannot overthrow you; you overthrow yourselves, if ye be overthrown at all."

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 1, 2.

[This Salutation traverses much the same ground as that of 1 Cor. i. 1-3, which see. Dr. Lyth's collection of Homiletic Suggestions gives:]

Vers. 1, 2. *The Happiness of the Church.*

I. **Its ministers** are messengers of Christ; are chosen by God; are diversely gifted as Paul and Timothy. [The twelve in the ship (Mark vi. 45-50) were the Church in germ, and *in miniature*. "The ship carried" the Church "and its fortunes." The diversity of the twelve men, all apostles, was anticipatory and typical. No type of character, no diversity, or capacity, or education, etc., comes amiss to the hand of the Great Builder. Every style of man may be an instrument with which He can build *something*, if only the man be willing simply to be used.]

II. **Its constitution** is Divine; holy; catholic ["with all the saints," etc.].

III. **Its wealth of privilege.**—Rich in its variety ["grace and peace"?]. Divine in its communication. Inexhaustible in its supply. [Such a source cannot "run dry." "All my fresh springs are in Thee" (Ps. lxxxvii. 7).]

Also:—

Ver. 1. *The Christian Ministry is*—

I. **Ordained by the will of God** [*i.e.* not only the "order of the ministry," but the man, Paul or other].

II. **United by bonds of brotherhood.**—[*Pares* all, though there be a *primus*].

III. **Devoted to the service of the Church**—[*I.e.* the greeting "*unto* the Church" is typical of Paul's whole relation to the Corinthians. The ministry is not the Church. It exists for the sake of the Church. It exists to bring "grace and peace" to the Church. If it do not, its *raison d'être* is gone. If a minister do not, his *raison d'être* is gone.]

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 3—7.

*Great Theme: Comfort and Affliction.*

I. **Two ~~counterpart~~ facts of life.**—1. It is a world of "*affliction*," but over it there rules a God of "*comfort*." *This pair of facts is but a special form of another pair:* "*sin*," "*grace*." Directly or indirectly, affliction springs from sin; not necessarily a man's personal sin, but from the presence of evil in the world. The Bible traces "evil," the manifest and painful disorder which has affected that which was as manifestly meant to be God's beneficent scheme of things, to the intrusion of moral evil; and in parallel fashion, there is no "*comfort*" which, directly or indirectly, is not "*grace*,"—it "*abounds through Christ*," just as the "*affliction*" is but a lower result of the moral evil whose climax was reached in "*the sufferings of Christ*,"—part of that work of God in Christ whose aim and goal is a "restitution of all things" (Acts iii. 21).

2. *Accordingly "comfort" is very much more than a palliative; it is the beginning of a cure.*—"*All* comfort" is thoroughly in Paul's manner. It means "all forms and kinds and aspects of comfort," reminding us of the manysidedness of the grace. Such "*comfort*" as God gives is not merely an anodyne for a smart; nor only a balm for a wound, a solace for sorrow, rest for weariness; not words of reassurance for fear and for distressful thoughts. It is a mother folding her crying

babe to her bosom (Isa. lxvi. 13); but it is more. It is not merely *tender* help; it is *strong* help. It gives *not only* relief and *ease*; it gives *strength*. It is not only that the young one flies to the mother's wing for shelter and cowers away under it, almost as full of fears there as it was when outside. It is the weak man taking his stand boldly by the side of the friend who has come to his help in answer to his call, and in the company of his strong helper finding himself strong to fight and do. Not merely pitying, sympathetic words which give solace under crushing burdens, so that the spirit is not crushed, though the strength may be overborne (vii. 6; Phil. ii. 27); but new strength given, and help which takes hold of the burden or the cross along with us at the opposite end [see this, perhaps, in the work of the "Comforter" in the original word of Rom. viii. 26], so that we carry better the load of affliction. And, which comes still nearer to the root purpose of all God's comfort, the "Comforter" gives a transformed view of, and meaning to, all "*affliction*," till at last we "rejoice (exultantly) in tribulations [same word as *afflictions* here] also" (Rom. v. 3). Thus we are not simply conquerors, but "more than conquerors," of all the "*affliction*" of life; we have not simply escaped, nor escaped unharmed, nor even come off with victory, but have been served by all that came against us to hinder or overwhelm; and this is the beginning of a reconstitution of the broken order, so that all things once more serve man, their designated king (Heb. ii. 7, 8). Παράκλησις in its fullest range covers no less than this. (*Strength* must never be omitted from our conception and our expectation of it. But, no doubt, through this section the *tenderness* is very prominent, and it should never be forgotten in our conception of God.

II. **The Divine source of comfort.**—1. Pointed out in the Critical Notes that *here, and here only, the Father is made a Paraclete, a Comforter.* As how should He not be, seeing that He is "*the God of our Lord Jesus Christ*"? *I.e.* as we know Him He is the God, the very thought of Whom is inseparably bound up with that of His love in the gift of Christ. We never think of Calvary but we think of Him Whose love gave us that Saviour; we never think of that Mercy but our quick heart-instinct traces all up to God. Our helper in "*afflictions*" is, then, the God Who is the sworn enemy of Sin, Who therefore gives a *gracious* help for what is fundamentally a *moral* evil. He comforts, as part of the work He set Himself to accomplish in the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. *So His other names here describe Him as well as indicate Him.*—All the names of God do so. They are in detail that "Name" of God which His people know, and trust in Him accordingly (Ps. ix. 10). Each several name is given according to the special phase of His one work of grace which may happen to be prominent. Manifestly the name is not here chosen at haphazard, or even for its beauty ["a nice name to use"], but is appropriate. He has always an appropriate "name" for every need of our life. He is "*the Father*," Whose unfailing characteristic is so surely to be merciful, that mercies must spring from His heart in Christ toward us. [What men may find Him apart from Christ and redemption grace, is another matter altogether.] [Cf. "root of bitterness" (Heb. xii. 15), which is more than "a bitter root." A bitter root *might* bring forth pleasant fruit or flowers. A "root of bitterness" can bear nothing but bitterness. So] a "God of comfort" or "a Father of mercies" is much more than a Father Who is merciful, or a God Who is merciful, or a God Who actually comforts. It is a God, a Father, Who, as we know Him in connection with the "Lord Jesus Christ," cannot be conceived of in any contrary association of ideas. As is His name, so is He.

3. *What a plea then is* "**For Thy Name's sake**"!—If He were to deny His "*comfort*" to an "*afflicted*" soul, He would give the lie to His very Name. There is a promise in such a name as this which He has put into Paul's lips, for the

use of the whole Church. The man who in his need calls to his help the "God of all παράκλησις," may take his stand on the very name he invokes. He has there a hold, so to say, upon God.

III. **The end of all comfort.**—1. The immediate purpose was no doubt the help of Paul himself. One man is worth God's helping; not only a man "of so much importance" to the world as Paul, "so necessary" to the work of Christ, but every man for whom Christ "thought it worth while" to die. "*Through Christ*," the Christ Who is that man's Christ as truly as He belongs to any other, that humblest, poorest, most obscure man may expect the "*comfort*," and that "*abounding*." 2. But very characteristic of the Spirit of Christ in St. Paul that he rather fastens attention upon the service which both his trials and his strength did to the Corinthians and to all believers. "We live for you" (iv. 15, v. 12, 13); "we suffer affliction for your sake; we are comforted for your benefit." The word "*vicarious*" has acquired a special application in the vocabulary both of formal theology and of the experimental life. It would be using words to confuse thought, therefore, to speak of Paul's sufferings or comfort as vicarious. It would be apt to set up the idea of a parallel or a community where "*the sufferings of Christ*" are unique. His are all that Paul's are here. But Paul's sufferings stop short of being all that His were for the Corinthians. The suggestion of the very conception of such a parallelism fills Paul with horror (1 Cor. i. 12). With that reservation, note how a Christian is partaker with Christ, in that what he suffers, and the help he gets, may benefit—and are taken up into the many-sided purpose of God's government "*that*" they may benefit—others who are under tribulation. 3. *The martyrdoms* of the Church's history *have not been waste of life*, even when some of the choicest of its men and women have gone to death. "Take, brethren, for an example of suffering and of patience," etc. (Jas. v. 10). Their comfort "*is effectual*," in that they who behold them suffer and triumph are able in their turn to endure and go through with the like sufferings. *Every sick saint*, perhaps for years a sufferer, helpless,—"useless," such are tempted to say,—*has a distinct field of service open* in that he is made the concrete example, the specimen case, by which God teaches those who wait upon, or who in any way come into contact with, the sufferer, how true and how real is the "*comfort*" of which the promises stand written in the Word (ver. 20), and are pledged in the very gift of Christ. The careless, the young, the incredulous, who dismiss preaching as "professional," or at best as a beautiful but very chimerical idea, the fearful though believing Christian,—these all see and believe what they would not hear and expect for themselves. An afflicted sufferer, full of the "*comfort*," is a Fact. Many turn away from a sick-room with a firmer belief in the supernatural, and Divine, and gracious; with a settled expectation that they also, after all, shall find sufficient "*comfort*." Without a word being spoken, the sufferer is a sermon, a message, a revelation, a gospel, to many a visitor. If words are spoken, with what force do they come! That sufferer is an *expert*. He speaks out of the fulness of knowledge. You may silence an advocate, but can do nothing against a witness. *How a preacher understands Paul's logic in ver.* 4. With such specimen "cases" in his mental note-book, he pronounces, he preaches, he exhorts, he encourages, he pledges "*the God of comfort*" to the afflicted soul, with the assurance of the experienced physician who has in his own profession studied a variety of cases, of many types, ages, conditions. He speaks no theories merely, but verified truth. And if he too has been the subject upon whom the Great Teacher has been pleased to make His experiment, by him to teach the students of God's ways gathered round his sick-bed, with what power does he afterwards, in his pulpit, or in his pastoral round, "*comfort others with the comfort wherewith*," etc. None can speak with such prevalent authority. At

least, God can make noblest use of, men listen most readily to, the man who "knows." It is worth the affliction, to be able to stand by another afflicted soul and bring one's comfort to the help of his burdened strength or failing faith. Thus God designs to make men "comforters" of men.

IV. **Hope springing from "comfort" in "affliction."**—[The R.V., supplying "*are*" instead of the "*shall ye be*" of the A.V., leaves the object of Paul's hope unexpressed, and more than a little uncertain. Still, it may perhaps be taken as a hope of their safe and victorious passage through the afflictions just then pressing upon them. The difference between the A.V. and the R.V. will simply be that in the A.V. this is expressed, and the ground of his hope is *his own experience*; whereas in the R.V. it is left unexpressed, and the ground of his hope is what he knows to be actually *their experience.* In either case the general principle of the argument remains the same. In the words of Rom. v. 3 *sqq.*, "experience works hope."] 1. *A Christian's "hope" is a very much stronger thing than* sometimes expresses itself in the very equivocal phrase, "*I hope so*"; very much more than an earnest wish, a longing glance of desire, with perhaps a half-expectation. "Hope is everywhere in Scripture the inspiring grace of the great conflict, being both passive and active. It is a grace that, like Patience, has many aspects. The word itself has a wide range of meanings. . . . Hope is one of the theological graces, with Faith and Charity, being a blessed combination of the two others. It is *Faith looking only to the future, but looking at it with the expectation of love*" (Pope, *Compendium*, iii. 214; who also says, p. 118:) "As it regards the future faith is hope; its confidence somewhat changes its character. Absolute confidence as to the present, it may increase as it regards the future. . . . It becomes, indeed, *the full assurance of hope*; a subtle and most beautiful expression that only experience can comprehend; the substantiation of things hoped for." If faith gives strength to expectation, hope gives elasticity. Faith upholds under pressure or in face of conflict; hope gives buoyancy of spirit, which itself is a strength. 2. Paul reminds us that its "*stedfastness*" is no mere half-enthusiastic persuasion up to which men "work themselves" until they come to believe certain what they strongly desire. It is *a most reasonable inference from facts.* It rests (1) upon the character of God, "His Name," and (2) on the accumulated facts of the past. It says: "Because of what we know in our own life, and have passed through [A.V.], and because of what we see and know in your life [R.V.], we have no doubt as to the future. What has been will be. '*The God of all comfort*' has never yet suffered '*affliction*' to arrive unaccompanied. These facts of life 'hunt in couples.' If '*affliction*' is near, comfort is not far away. Look for it; lift up head and heart, and look around for it; you will surely see it drawing nigh. You are not going to be left to be overwhelmed. We know the past too well! And we know Him too well!" "*Stedfast!*" 3. No surer sign that this "*hope*" is not nature but grace than this, that after long years of "comfort" the heart so readily sinks under the newest pressure or in presence of the latest tribulation. Naturally, the Christian heart has perpetually to begin again with its lesson, and after nine hundred and ninety-nine deliverances quakes and fails at the thousandth trial. In fairness to the accumulated "proof" (Rom. v. 3) of our God through many years of "experience" and "experiment"—indeed, in fairness to Him—accumulating experience should work accumulating hope, till at last the Christian man "exults in tribulations also, knowing that," etc. But it is not often so. The heart argues with itself that such growing confidence is very logical, and condemns itself for doubting and fearing where it ought to hope and believe. But logic is powerless. The strength of hope is a gift, a grace, a Divine thing, not natural—the grace of the "God of hope" (Rom. xv. 13),

## HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—*Verses* 8—11.

*Death and Deliverance.*

I. **Unrecorded dangers.**—1. *What a glimpse of the life of Paul is given here.* The Acts gives no "Life of St. Paul." It is a chapter in the history of the growing "kingdom of God"; the things which Jesus *went on* to do and to teach *after* He was taken up. [But this lays precarious emphasis on "began" (Acts i. 1).] Paul, like Peter, is introduced, and dismissed, just when, and just so far as, the exigencies of that history demand. The whole story of the revelation and the historic evolution of the Kingdom is, in Old Testament and New Testament, written historically, and very largely biographically. But the men are secondary, the kingdom is first. 2. *What adequate motive* other than devotion to a Christ for the actuality of Whose life Paul had abundant evidence, would have carried him through so much? What he had surrendered is well known. What he gained in exchange he is now, and will eternally be, learning in the presence of his Christ. But the immediate return for the exchange was to be "in deaths oft," as the climax of all other hardships. Yet through how much the love of Christ will carry a man! For wealth, or honour, or from fear of disgrace, men will do great things and will dare deaths. But to live a life of perpetual, "killing" hardship and peril, of obloquy and ignominy, of privation, of thankless and unthanked labour,—a "far more exceeding weight" of work and self-denial and shame and danger,—the only price with which to purchase such devotion is this: "The love of Christ constraineth me." 3. *The unrecorded martyrdoms, the unrecorded heroisms,* of the Church are suggested. There are martyrdoms of daily life ["I die daily"] in the workshop, where one man has, with all wisdom and beauty of life, for years stood out a witness for, and a servant of, Christ; in the schoolroom and dormitory,—and there are no ingenuities of persecution and torture greater, in their proportion, than those devised by schoolboys and schoolgirls for a Christian confessor in their midst; at the table, where for years the husband has never broken a sullen silence towards his faithful wife except to complain, or sneer, or stab with keen words, because, and only because, she is a Christian; and the like. It is heroic, and has stirred the heart of the very persecutor, to see men, or even tender women, go to the stake with a song or a least a cheerful word, and stand quietly until the spirit escaped away, as in a chariot of fire, out of the midst of the flames which leaped up after it like disappointed hounds baulked of their prey. But the daily burden that presses "out of measure" until the most cheerful begin to say, "This will kill me"; the daily racking which tortures all that is finest and most sensitive in the nature; the daily danger which is faced in perilous mission-fields or in unhealthy city slums, as for Christ's sake men and women go quietly forth morning after morning to the daily round,—this is carried, or borne, or done, without much comment, without indeed much notice. But One Heart knows it and rejoices in it. There is romance enough, heroism enough, martyrdom enough, in many quiet lives to kindle the enthusiasm of a Church or of a world, if it could only be known and read and written as He knows it, for Whom it is undertaken and faced and wrought. 4. *He has a record where nothing* is unwritten, nothing unrecorded; down to the last detail all is "entered up" in most perfect completeness; not a name which has borne anything, or been anything, for Him is omitted. So, too, there are—

II. **Unrecorded deliverances.**—What a story will some unknown saints have to tell in heaven, of their daily death indeed, but also of their daily deliverances! Not alone such foremost heroes as Paul, but many a hard-pressed, yet triumphant, "nobody," in the knowledge and reckoning of even their Christian fellows, will

have a story which is really one of perpetual miracle, a perpetual "*resurrection.*" Often, literally, "as good as dead" on all human lines of estimation, taking death into practical, near account every day, in the laying out of plans and the undertaking of work for Christ. Each new morning a new Easter morning, a life renewed as by a real raising up of God's own hand. Many a burden, many a battle, many a danger, is never known outside the secrecy of the man's own heart; and many a deliverance too. There must, moreover, be *many deliverances unrecorded in even the privacy of the man's own knowledge.* In each day's common life there must be for every man many occasions when danger, and even death, has been very really near, but, just because the deliverance has been so complete, he has passed through all in the happy, secure confidence of ignorance. Every ordinary journey has its peril. Every day's duty offers at many points opportunity to "death." Men could not bear to think of, or to know, through, and out of, how much they are daily being delivered.

III. **Indirect blessing from these experiences.**—1. We may narrow ver. 9 a little, and press its teaching with a particular application. **The near prospect of death,** if sanctified, (1) *Destroys all trust in ourselves.* At that moment the vanity of all human endeavour and resistance to "fate," is palpable. If the grace of God be yielded to, *all trust in self for salvation* may at that moment be destroyed. No lesson harder to learn, or more urgently necessary than this. Fundamental that the man should learn to put all reliance for salvation, not on anything within the circle of his own life and character, but wholly and entirely to make salvation depend upon Christ and His work. Yet not until face to face with eternity—and not always even then—is fully seen the unreliableness of everything within the man himself—everything he has been and has done, or has *not* been and has *not* done—as a resting-place for hope of acceptance before God. Thus it (2) *Disposes to trust in God.* "'To whom should we go?' One moment more, and the mystery of the future will be a mystery no longer; where men have hitherto been inquiring, and speculating, and hoping or fearing, I shall know. One moment more and the world of which I do know something will have slipped from me, and I shall find myself in a world of which I *know* nothing. At home here, I shall be a stranger there, in a strange world. I am a sinner, and in one moment more, I shall find—what? What can I trust to for my 'leap into the darkness'; what can assure me that I shall 'light on my feet,' and on sure ground of rest and peace? When I loose my hold, perforce, of a world of knowledge, and drop into a world which is entirely a matter of faith, what am I to trust to?" Nothing, except the promises of God in connection with the work of Christ. Invaluable and secure, or valueless and deceiving, will these in that supreme moment be. Trust in God, or nothing except a huge venture with an eternal risk. Happy if a man, thus shut up to trusting in his God in Christ does trust. But further there is (3) *The hope of resurrection.* And this rests securely on the power and declared will of the "*God* who *raises* the *dead.*" "The (declarations of the) Scriptures and the power of God" were the two "heads" of an argument which Christ presented for the consideration of Sadducee doubters or unbelievers (Matt. xxii. 9). An *argumentum ad homines*, of course, like the appeal of Paul to Agrippa. The Jew, such a Jew as even Agrippa, could hardly "think it incredible that God—**God**—should raise the dead" (Acts xxvi. 8).

2. *The knowledge of others is to be enriched by our experience of deliverance.*—"*We would not have you ignorant,*" etc. And so, too, God would not have them ignorant, and, for the sake of the glory of the God of the deliverance, and for the strengthening of their faith, would have His people communicate their experiences. A widely applicable principle. A reticence on such sub-

jects, partly the result of temperament, and partly a tradition in many sections of the Christian Church, seals the lips of many, whose experience of the ways of God is most extensive, and would be most precious and helpful to other souls. A groundless and not very natural idea that such things are "too sacred to speak about," coupled with a dislike, which has its honourable side, to be made the object of attention and to be the subject of one's own talk, robs the Church of much testimony which would be its wealth. It is not a question of speaking of such deliverances before unsympathetic persons, "casting pearls before swine," but of imparting them to those who are often in the like perils and trials, and need the same help and encouragements. To such hearers, often hungry for such help as testimony of deliverance would afford, and finding not their smallest difficulty in the thought that they are singular in their own experiences, it is a revelation and an inspiration to hear a fellow-Christian—crucifying self, doing violence to habit and temperament, for the sake of glorifying the Deliverer and of helping souls—break the silence and tell his story of "*death*" and "*deliverance*."

3. *A wonderful unity of heart and effort* is called out by Paul's experiences (see fuller Homily on ver. 11). The Pauls always owe much to the unknown pleaders in the Corinths; to those who can only "*help together*" by their pleading and "*supplication*." How many deliverances did Paul owe to the fact that in every Church there were some who loved him, and who followed him wherever he went with "*supplications*." How much of such a man's success was by the Divine Eye—which alone can analyse the intricacies of such a problem—traceable to the many prayers put up for Paul by grateful hearts in his many Churches. "Success" is a very complex thing in itself, and in the causes which contribute to it. But not the least of these are the prayers of helpers who can only help by prayers. Paul and his work, with its accompaniments of danger, "*death*," "*deliverance*," rises up in a towering eminence in the view of the past of the Church's history. But it rested upon a broad-spread, and in great part hidden, base, not the least solid stratum of which was laid in the prayers of his many helpers, "fellow-*wrestlers*," with each other and with him, in their prayers for him (Rom. xv. 30).

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 12—22.

I. **Observe how Paul meets criticism.**—1. Every public man gets it; invites it. We are perpetually, whether public persons or private, running the gauntlet of somebody's scrutiny and "judgment." If criticism be that of those who presumably are competent critics, a wise man will pocket his resentment at any unfair *animus* which may be associated with it, and, with the aid of the objective estimate of him, not too graciously furnished, will endeavour to see how much of truth there is in it. 2. *Paul shows no bitterness* against his Corinthian critics, nor does he "ride off on the high horse" and disdain reply altogether. There is a silence in the presence of criticism which is really obstinacy and pride. "If I cannot be trusted, I will say nothing." To play at "despising criticism" is a game at which two parties can play, so far as the "despising" goes. *Paul explains.* It was not an unreasonable demand that he should explain his change of plan. The Christian minister, above all, must not "cut" or "drop" hastily, or in personal *pique*, even his unfairest critic. This may prove to be the necessity of the case in the end. But it should be the last step, reluctantly taken. If, moreover, he is the man's pastor, he is under obligation to the man's soul, even that man's. Better to answer him temperately, and offer all reasonable explanation. Anybody can cut men off from friendship or from a Church. It is a greater thing to conquer, or keep, by winning the opponent's judgment or respect

and perhaps his esteem or affection. Sometimes—not always—patience, transparent sincerity, holiness, and explanation will do this. 3. Not *resentfully, but solemnly, Paul offers his conduct to God's examination.* "*I call God for a witness,*" etc. He can look himself in the face; he has "*the testimony of his conscience,*" etc. Under the penalty of God's judgment "*upon his soul,*" he can challenge God to look into his heart and to examine his motives. We are reminded of the frequent protestations of innocence made by David in the Psalms [early in his life], made as before God. No real difficulty in them, to any man with any practical experience of life. It is one thing to lay bare before God that inmost life, which is for the most part only known to God, and to confess its sinfulness, not daring or desiring to do anything else; it is quite another thing, in regard to the official life, or even the private life so far as it is known ("acknowledged," ver. 14) to men by ordinary observation, and in regard to particular charges, to lay it before God for His verdict, appealing from man's unfair, or prejudiced, or malicious, judgment of it to His perfect knowledge of the inmost motive and heart. In doing this there is no Pharisaism, no spiritual pride, no self-righteousness. God is on the side of right; the man who has walked in "holiness and sincerity of God" before Him may claim His judgment, and will not claim it in vain. 4. Happy then the man who has the "testimony of his conscience," and can appeal even to his very critics in their honest mood (ver. 14). If a man will keep conscience and character right before God, he may leave God to take care for his reputation amongst men. If he can confront God, he may carry his head, not "high," but with calm assurance, in the face of men.

II. **Observe for what reason Paul is sensitive to criticism.**—1. For one thing only. It is not necessary to suppose that he cared nothing for the goodwill, or even the good opinion, of his Corinthian people. "I don't care for anybody's judgment" need not necessarily be a *Christian* indifference (cf. 1 Cor. iv. 3). But there is a sensitiveness as to "what people think," which is vanity and pride, hungry for praise. 2. To Paul his *character is here a matter of concern* chiefly *because of* his responsibility in connection with *the Gospel* he had in trust for God. "I don't care about the character of the preacher, if I get a good sermon!" "The seed will grow, if it be real and have the life in it, whoever sows it!" "Cannot God save—has He not before now saved—by the word of wicked men?" All these are heard, and have enough truth in them to make them serviceable. But, as usual, they need a complementary truth to balance and guard them, and to give the whole round of what is true in the matter. Paul at any rate felt that if he were a man whose promises could not be relied upon—lightly made, lightly kept, lightly broken—there might be a question whether his view of the Gospel had been lightly come by, and accepted; whether it were a thing lightly held. A man who says and unsays in a breath, or in quick succession, who is shallow and fickle in the simple matters of every-day life, is he the man to whom God will really have revealed His Son and His Gospel? [For it is to be remembered that Paul, like every apostle, was not simply an expositor of a fixed and complete body of teaching, a record quite independent of him; as the modern preacher is. He was an original source, through which God was giving new truth to the world; through Paul, in part, was being given the growing Gospel of God in Christ. His character therefore stood in closer relation to his preaching than a modern preacher's can. Still, it is true that] a minister may, must, be specially jealous of his good name, inasmuch as, justly or unjustly, any imputation upon him will be reflected upon the Gospel he preaches. Equivocation, falsehood, acted deception, no dependence to be placed upon principles, or character, or promises, are serious blots on the ministerial character. The mere suspicion of such things were serious. 3. *And this goes higher. As the Gospel, so the Giver of the Gospel.* If it were not Truth, absolute, reliable

(1 Tim. i. 15), infallible, it might either compel us to modify our idea of the Christ Himself, or at best might be discredited or dismissed, as not from Him at all. Christ's character cannot, as Paul's conceivably might, be dissociated from that of the Gospel. As He is, it is. He repeatedly—it is one of the marked characteristics of His teaching—identifies Himself with the Gospel. *He is the Gospel.* 4. And yet again, as is the Gospel, as is the Christ of the Gospel, so is the God who gives the Christ. God is faithful, Christ is faithful, every promise is faithful, the Gospel which contains them all is faithful, and the very preachers are not unworthy of the Gospel they represent and proclaim.

## SEPARATE HOMILIES.

Ver. 10. *The God of Deliverance.*—Ps. lxviii. 28, "He that is our God is the God of **Salvation**." An old "note" of the God of the Bible; ever true.

I. **Our lesson in grammar in God's school.**—1. Can our heart conjugate the verb "**deliver**"? Yes. Present: "Doth deliver" [But query the reading?] Past: "Hath delivered." Future tense: "Will deliver." "God" in every case the "subject." Whatever lesson we are slow to learn, we have had occasion enough to know this excellently well. He has given us plenty of practice. Yet the future tense does not at all times come very readily to our lips; we stammer at "*Will* deliver." Our slow heart easily forgets "Hath delivered." In the story of the goodness of our life, we find it hard to pick out in the sentence, in the incidents of to-day, the present tense with its nominative: "God doth deliver." We will ask, as not the least mercy of His hand, a heart quick to pick Him out in the story, and to see His "deliverance" in every day's common, commonplace, safety and help. 2. The difficulty is not all of our own heart's creating. The very completeness of the "deliverance" in part creates it. We are brought through in such complete safety that we pass through in happy security, entirely ignorant that danger or need of help has been so near and so great. The monotonously ordinary security of a common day is sometimes—if only we saw it as He does who accomplishes it—a most marvellous "*deliverance.*" [Very often, indeed, He spreads "a table" for His people "in the presence of" their "enemies" (Ps. xxiii. 5). He holds these back—in their impotent malice—while His guests eat His banquet of plentiful "goodness and mercy." We see them, but banquet in peace, crying, "See how He *doth deliver.*"] 3. The Present is so closely linked with Past and Future that the present deliverance cannot be considered alone. It is rooted in the mercy of the past; it projects itself, inserts itself, [mortises itself,] into that of the future. The mercy of to-day—"doth deliver"—is only the newest, latest link of a chain of deliverances which reaches back to my earliest need, and will stretch onward to the latest moment of my life's necessity. No mercy stands by itself; no deliverance is an isolated piece of goodness. No matter where the musing heart takes hold of the mercies of life, at whatever point it locates the Present Tense, it is led on backward, forward, by links of the closest association. Ps. lix. 10 gets quoted with more than a verbal inaccuracy. It is false to the thought to say, "The God of my *mercies.*" The Psalmist says, and feels, more justly, "of my *mercy.*" Each incident of mercy is so closely linked with what precedes and follows, they follow so closely one upon another, that, in the review, they coalesce into one long "*mercy*" (Ps. xl. 5). Indeed, to speak humanly, in the grammar of God's thought there is no present, past, future. We use the words; we distinguish between the times. The deliverances emerge and present themselves to us, in order and temporal

succession. But they are by no means separate and independent "deliverances." They are incidents in one continuous deliverance. It is only human feeling which says, "*Awake* to help me!" (Ps. lix. 4). Our God has no need to arouse Himself for each new emergency, to consider how to make at the moment some new provision for the new demand. [As in Creation, so in Grace,—and the two are one Work,—the "Father worketh hitherto" (John v. 17); He never takes His hand from the thing He is creating, from the life He is regulating and guiding. There are no briefest pauses in His attention and interest. There is no intermission, even for an instant, in His ceaselessly operative activity to "*deliver.*"] Must not be so overpressed as to become fatalism, with its inevitable, unalterable, predetermined order of incidents and persons, in a Christian man's life and course. But he should thankfully remember that the daily new "deliverances" (in the widest sense) are parts of a lifelong Deliverance, details in the working out of "a Purpose" "to bring His many sons unto glory" (Rom. viii. 28; Heb. ii. 10). [Should be remembered also how central—as in the chapter, Rom. viii., so in thought and fact—is the word "**good**" in ver. 28. The mere temporal "deliverance," from perplexity, or persecution, or death, is not the main thing in the mind of the God of our "Deliverance." These, indeed, are not always granted. [Sometimes the real "deliverance" is effected rather by His shutting up against us paths, doors, which we begged to be allowed to enter.] Such providential deliverances are given or withheld, according as will best subserve the "good," the definition of which is the "conforming" each son of His family of adopted ones "to the image of *the* Son, the Firstborn amongst many brethren." Such a deliverance from danger as Paul is thinking of, is not an unworthy thing for God to consult for, but its real purpose falls in with His larger plan of gracious working, in Paul and all whom his life may affect and influence, the goal of which is the perfected holiness of His people.] Present, past, future, are our human expression; the fact—of our deliverance, as of His purpose and love, Who is "I AM"—is a perpetually extended present of grace and power.

II. **Paul's confidence rests upon the God who delivers.**—One lifelong deliverance; because One Mind, One Heart, One God, in all the deliverances of life. For this reason Paul counts upon deliverance; he counts upon **Him**! The future is as certain as the past, or present, because He may as certainly be reckoned with. "He cannot deny Himself"—*i.e.* He cannot at any point be unfaithful to His *pledged word* in the past, to His *proved character* in the past, to the *precedents* He has set in the past. His past acts and deliverances are "words" from His heart; He has declared in them what manner of God He is, and will be. He cannot turn His back upon the Self of past days, or upon His past principles of action. He can do no other, and can be no other, than His record in the past. Present, Past, Future, therefore, proceed in orderly, secure development. He can so guide and deliver His people to-day that the present shall fit harmoniously on to the past, and prepare the way for the future, with perfect sequence and adaptation; and the future deliverance is a certainty. [Has stamped His own unity upon His work in creation. This truth in modern theories of "development" is that no new created thing is isolated, a mere new beginning; it is always in close relation to the past; it is the next stage in the unfolding of an Idea upon which the Creator is ceaselessly at work; however modified, the lines of the preceding forms are in it; in its turn it preludes, and suggests, the coming forms. So His own unity is stamped upon the working of His delivering providence. Deliverance follows upon, grows out of, deliverance; deliverance preludes, and leads up to, deliverance. The heart that knows

God finds the analogy run very closely; and the argument in it is: "One God; the God of my mercy."] [Or, with another natural analogy. Give the astronomer six weeks, six months, six years—the longer the better—to make and collate and study observations of a new planet; and he will soon tell you where it may be looked for six years, or sixty, or six hundred years hence. He has "found the law" of its orbit and its motion. Paul records: "*Hath delivered*," and "*doth deliver*." Not two observations, but many a thousand, are embodied in that; he has "found the law" of the providence of his God. He says "*Will deliver*" with all confidence. He knows where to look for and to find his God.]

I. "We'll praise Him for all that is past,
II. We'll trust Him for all that's to come."
—*Hymn by J. Hart.*

Ver. 12. [May be made the occasion of a sermon upon] *Conscience.*

I. 1. **Man, alone of God's earthly creation, can know himself.**—Paul can be the subject and object of an act of cognition and reflection. Paul can talk to himself about himself. One of the marks of his personality; one thing which marks in him the "image of God." Also Godlike in this: can know and judge between "right" and "wrong," in the moral sense, and according to God's standard. [The creatures find out what brings pleasure, or what brings their master's punishment. Men quickly find what is advantageous, or what means pain, trouble, loss. But moral "wrong" and "right" are more than this.] By *self-consciousness* man can *know* himself; by *conscience* can *judge* of himself, his thoughts, words, acts. Conscience can even judge conscience! [2. The "*con-*" is a real personification. A man can, if he will, keep his inner self a secret, locked up from those who know and love him best; an inner shrine of privacy whose door he can close against all comers (1 Cor. ii. 11). "All," except another Self who shares this *knowledge along with* him; from whom no secret can be hid; who knows everything, and will "have its say," and pronounce its judgment, upon everything.] 3. Very little use in discussing whether this be a distinct faculty, or only the judgment exercising itself upon moral questions, as it might upon the wisdom or unwisdom of actions or motives. "Words, to no profit" (2 Tim. ii. 14). Surest basis of any attainable knowledge is found in the Scriptural distinction between "soul" and "spirit." [Primary text on this topic, 1 Thess. v. 23; the only complete enumeration of the elements of the (so-called) *trichotomy* of man's nature. All three are mentioned elsewhere. Scripture consistent throughout in the distinctive use of "soul" and "spirit," in both Old and New Testament. All Paul's vocabulary of the religious life is built up upon the distinction. Notably in 1 Cor ii).] No animal is more than body + "soul." The life of "body + soul," with all their powers and faculties, in varying degrees of development and training, is the "natural" life. The "natural man's" life finds there its range and limit. What is (often only in very rudimentary, but germinal, form) found in the activities of the material and immaterial part of the animal, "from the oyster to the eagle" (Alford), but developed, cultured, to largest range and highest pitch of perfection,—these are the life of the "natural man," except that in him also there remains personality, with its self-knowledge and its self-determining will,—part of the "image of God" not lost. [But some would include this within the life of the "spirit" also. The line of demarcation is not easy, perhaps not possible, to draw. Certainly] the *conscience* belongs to the "spirit," the Godlike, God-capable, side of human nature. It is its "eye" (Matt. vi. 22; Eph. i. 18 [N.B. var. reading]). It is the organ of all knowledge of "spiritual" things; its possession puts man into communication with that "spiritual" world, in which God, sin, redemption, guilt, holiness, are ruling facts. The judgment of the intellect is *per se*, neutral,

non-moral; the judgment of the conscience is moral, concerned with the ethics whose basis is the law of God.

**II. In any case a distinction must, very helpfully, be drawn between the faculty for knowing moral differences and the actual and correct knowledge of them.**—1. Conscience is the Judge seated on the bench, ready to administer, and apply to any cases and questions proposed, any law supplied to It. It makes no law; It may administer a bad, or imperfect, or mistaken law; It may judge by an imperfect standard. It is the Eye, made for the purpose of distinguishing Light from Darkness; possessing the power to distinguish, even while there is no Light actually given. It can of itself supply no Light; of itself it can enact no code, can establish no tests of Beauty or Deformity. It is a *moral* sense, analogous, say, to the æsthetic sense (Phil. i. 9, Greek). The Law and all knowledge of it, what actually is Beautiful or Evil, Light or Darkness, —these must come, must be given, to Conscience from without. It recognises, but cannot by itself originate or discover, truth. Truth is a *revelation*; Conscience is only *organon*. [Said Rabbi Duncan, similarly, of Reason: "It is certainly more of an instrument of discovery than a discoverer. At least, I don't think it has discovered much. It is of use to show its own impotence, and of use to welcome revelation" (*Colloquia Peripat.*, 62).] 2. *No race, no man, is ever actually found with nothing but the bare faculty;* the Judge is never left without some knowledge of the law and will of God; the eye is always visited with some light with which to deal. But this is grace, not conscience. It is something added to, an endowment of, the bare faculty. "Innate" ideas of morals are really implanted ideas. The most elementary knowledge of "right" and "wrong" according to the mind of God; the response which the heart and conscience sooner or later always make—approving, accepting, applauding—to the "right" as God estimates it, whenever it is proposed to their judgment,—these are the fruits of the Redemption of the Race by Christ; part of the "free gift which has come upon all men," designed to issue in, and lead "unto, justification of life" (Rom. v. 18); they are rays, dim and scanty perhaps, of "the Light that lighteth every man" (John i. 9). The heathen have some (Rom. ii. 14, 15); it needs supplementing, guiding, training, by the use of the written Word. The inner light needs the check, the direction, the interpretation of the objective Standard. And if, of the two selves and their utterances and judgments, there can be no doubt to a man in any degree of spiritual health which is the worthy and true; if the Judge knows God's law at all, and responds to it, and gives right judgment as before God; if the Eye has any light, and recognises it, and loves it,—this is all grace, the working and gift of the Holy Spirit, Whom the death of Christ has made in some measure the birthright privilege and possession of every human soul.

**III. How far are the judgments of conscience authoritative and final?**—1. As the æsthetic sense, the sense for beauty, may, by being accustomed to bad models, be perverted or depraved, until it may even come to prefer the poor, and mean, and unworthy, and ugly; or as it may be developed, and its sensitiveness may be cultivated, to a very high pitch of delicacy, till it judges rightly, by a swift, infallible instinct which does not stop to reason, nor could always give its "reasons"; so may the moral sense, the Conscience. As the judge from the bench may grow accustomed to a bad, defective, or iniquitous law, or may even come to rejoice in injustice, whilst knowing it unjust; or, as he may get continually a wider knowledge of a perfect Code, and may develop a growing readiness and delicacy of just perception of its applicableness to particular cases; so may the inward judge, the Conscience. The eye may grow diseased until the very light is painful, and it seeks darkness;

so may the moral eye, the Conscience. [Hence Paul's perfectly conscientious persecution was sin. Its conscientiousness did not make it right. "Forgive them, for they know not what they do,"—but they needed "forgiving." Ignorance in their case, conscientiousness in Paul's,] *left the door open for mercy.* In him the judge wanted a better law; though how much of pride, self-will, hatred of Jesus of Nazareth, mingled with his conscientious, zealous activity in persecution, perhaps only his Lord could tell.] Hence the need for the objective, absolute, Divine Standard. The "light within" may "become darkness." The eye may cease to be "single." ["Right by my clock." But what of the "clock"? "Correct by my scales," "true by my yard measure." But what of the "scales" and "measure"? They need bringing constantly before the (Divine) Office of Weights and Measures for examination, and perhaps adjustment. Tell me the moral company you make your Judge keep—both in reading and in actual social intercourse; he may have become corrupted, and be giving, not the judgments of God, but the foolish or wicked decisions of an evil age or set, and may even have come to judge as your own wicked heart desires. (In some handicrafts the workers always, day and night, wear gloves, so as to keep the delicate sensitiveness of touch unimpaired).]

IV. **Hence conscience may be trained.**—Like any other faculty. We learn not only to walk, but to see with eyes which, as organs for sight, were perfect at birth. Give more and more of knowledge; keep the best standard before conscience; live in the company of holy people, and of the Holy One Himself; conscience will thus learn to think and judge after the standard of God.

V. **The only morally hopeless man** is the man who has so grieved the Spirit of God that He has withdrawn not the capacity, indeed, but the *modicum* of knowledge—which was His original gift, and was only maintained, like all "good," by His ceaseless grace. The eye may die with ill-usage, or with disuse. The judge who is never appealed to, or is disregarded, may slumber on the bench more and more deeply, until he seems past awakening, or sits practically dead upon the very judgment seat; representative of the King though he is, he may cease to speak, or may be past speech. Yet note, these are figures which may be pushed until they become falsehoods. The eye may seem dead from disease or disuse, yet we should never assume that it is past awakening to its old activity. If the light return, it may, except in the rarest instances, still be opened, and may resume its old function of seeing and distinguishing. Perhaps the judge seldom or never really vacates his seat; he may be roused, and indeed will rouse himself, at the sound of the judgment trumpet, if not before. He will resume his office, if it be only eternally to condemn. [Manhood came into the world in its complete equipment, personal, capable of God, and will go complete into eternity. Children had a conscience before they knew it. The lost have not lost it. The saved in heaven have it still, though there it has only occasion to approve.]

VI. **Conscience may approve, as well as condemn; may be a real comfort, a very effective strength.**—So here. Through misconceptions and misrepresentations and opposition Paul holds on his way. Men at Corinth or elsewhere may say and do what they please in regard to him, he can look them, and still more can look himself, in the face and say, "*In simplicity,*" etc. [In a qualified sense: "Which of you convicteth me of sin?"] Majorities do not settle morals for the Christian man; he may have to be solitary, singular, with nobody on his side, or agreeing with his judgment, except his Master above him, and his Judge within him. "*Our rejoicing is this,*" etc. [May illustrate the topic by the barometer on board the vessel sailing between the Tropics. It is the soul's aneroid, giving early, decisive warning of danger otherwise

perhaps unseen. Or by the little dog which lies carved in marble at the feet of his master, on the tomb of William the Silent at Delft. By barking, and scratching his face, he had awoke his master and so saved his life, on the occasion of a night attack on the tent of William by the Spaniards in the camp before Mons. William had only just time to escape. Good to have such a friend. *Men have, in Conscience.*] [Some men have this "candle of the Lord" only to put it out, that they may better sleep sin's sleep in undisturbed darkness.] ["A stony, benumbed, bribed, deluded, muzzled conscience" (Bunyan).]

Ver. 20. *Christ the "Yea" and the "Amen."*

I. **The promises of God.**—1. "*How many soever be,*" etc. What a suggestion of *their number.* No stint in His measure in this, as there is in nothing else which He provides for man. He gives promises "with both hands earnestly" (Mic. vii. 3). "Good measure, pressed down, running over, into our bosom" (Luke vi. 38). It is God's style of dealing with us. He promises worthily of Himself. 2. What a suggestion of *their variety.* Such old-fashioned books as Clarke's *Faithful Promiser* may have been too mechanical in their tabulation of the promises, and their apportionment to the different needs and occasions, so that the reader might look for a promise, as it were, docketed and put away in a labelled "pigeon-hole," ready for reference and production at a moment's notice. But such a book was at least the product of a familiar and thorough knowledge of the Word of God, which had led up to the conviction that no need could arise, or had ever arisen, in the life of a child of God, but it had been anticipated by the Father, and that for it the Father had said the exactly right and sufficient thing. The style of book may go out of fashion—and may come into fashion again—but the fact remains. St. Paul's Bible—the Old Testament Scriptures—is a mine of wealth for the heart of the child of God. He hardly had in his thought here any *cento* of promissory "texts" from the Old Testament, though the fulness and appropriateness of these is a fact which every year's fuller knowledge of the Word of God will confirm, with more abundant reason for strong conviction. In every direction in which need may lead or drive us, we find words which "might have been"—is that all we should say?—"written for the occasion." [An old missionary in Fiji (known to H. J. F.), crossing over the island where he resided, to his Sunday morning's work, found, at the crest of a long and toilsome hill which he had to climb in the sun's full heat, and in the enervating, relaxing atmosphere, a stick planted in the ground, and to it were attached two or three fresh-gathered cocoa-nuts, whose sweet, cool "milk" might refresh him on his journey to preach. A paper tied to the stick explained that a native, knowing that the preacher must needs pass that way that morning, had so provided beforehand refreshment for his wearied teacher.] [Or the illustration may be the *cache* of preserved meats or vegetables, put away beneath a cairn of stones by Arctic explorers, as a provision for any lost or starving party who may pass that way.] Turn we in any direction, in the day of any distress, a promise confronts us, made for the occasion. The promise is at any rate the paper tied to the stick, the flag left flying over the *cache,* to call attention to the substantial help which is "*laid up* for those that fear God" (Ps. xxxi. 19). The promise is there, the help is there. [Often difficult to defend in cool reason such a use of a mere "scrap" of Scripture, torn away from all context and history, as Bunyan once made, when greatly distressed as to what might become of his family if he were taken from them. He found comfort in Jer. xlix. 11, "Leave thy fatherless children, and let thy widows trust in Me"; words spoken to Edom,

the enemy of the people of God. Yet such a use of a fragment of Scripture is but one of innumerable examples in the life and practice of some of the wisest, holiest, most spiritual people in every age and Church, and is not lightly to be despised or set aside as unwarranted. Does not the Spirit of God in such cases guide the instincts of God's people, and give intuitions of truth which reason afterwards justifies? In this particular instance there is at any rate in the words a revelation of the heart of God which, if thus disposed even to Edomite enemies, surely warranted the faith and hope of the Bunyans of all time.] No need without its promise of supply, in infinite variety. 3. What a suggestion of the "*exceeding great and precious promises*" (2 Pet. i. 4). *Stars of first magnitude* in the expanse of revealed mercy, which overarches all the need and weakness of man's life. [There are many of smaller magnitude. With the trained eye, the closer scrutiny, the more help, the more of such "stars" are brought into view. Heaven would be poorer without any one smallest "star." Not the magnitude, but the steadiness, of the pole-star makes it valuable to steer by.] Extraordinary promises of extraordinary help for extraordinary needs, needs perhaps occurring but once in a lifetime, but not forgotten or left unprovided against. [In a banker's private room may now and again be seen a £10,000 bank-note; a rare thing, a curiosity—cancelled, of course. "I promise to pay," etc. "An exceeding great and precious promise." There are £5 promises, £10, £100, in the Word—and *still more truly in the heart*—of God; and there are £10,000 promises, and these never "*cancelled*"!] Their number, variety, fulness, and sufficiency are all worthy of, and quite "natural" to expect from

II. **The God of the promises.**—1. *They are worth nothing, they are nothing, but for their connection with Him.* The cheque or the bank-note is in itself a nearly valueless piece of a rather special make of paper, but it passes from hand to hand, as full of value, not only because "there is money at the back of it," but because there is a person at the back of it somewhere. It is part of that "transfer of credit" which forms so much of the money-settlements of modern business; the credit is that of the credible and solvent person somewhere. So the heart does not so much rely upon a promise as upon a Promiser. Behind the word of promise there is indeed the store of provision for its redemption; but the real guarantee and ground of its helpfulness is that it is His promise, who is the "*faithful God*" (ver. 18). There is no ultimate rest in propositions, or in promises, but in a Person. 2. *What a view of God's character.* May dwell with adoring, grateful wonder upon the reputation He has earned in the story of the Church, or in our personal life as a "*promise-keeping God.*" Filled with astonishment as we see how perfectly, and in face of what "difficulties" (as we humanly speak), He has fulfilled His promises; so that, with accumulating wealth of proof, the testimony always is, "There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken, . . . all came to pass" (Josh. xxi. 45). "There hath not failed one word of all His good promise" (1 Kings viii. 56). But there is an earlier, perhaps a greater wonder, that He is a "*promise-making God.*" Moreover, not waiting to be asked to promise to help or to save, but promising ["answering," Isa. lxv. 24] before men ask; providing for our fears and our needs before they have arisen, and in that fact binding Himself to help, or bless, or make holy. His are the promises of a God Who has volunteered them; Who in His loving forwardness towards us, proffers His help. And since the words are from His lips, promises are prophecies. He promises that things shall be; then they shall be. There is no doubt, so far as the fulfilment depends upon Him. And in cases where man's own act or his moral attitude is the necessary

condition of the fulfilment, then the very moment the condition is fulfilled on man's side, there is no delay, no reluctance, on God's side to finish the matter—He does not need a moment's persuasion to induce Him to follow up the fulfilment of the condition by doing his own part; He fulfils His part on the instant. He is a God Whose willingness to give is indicated by His unsolicited readiness to promise. *A promise-making God!* 3. It may almost be said that He *is a God of more promises than there are in the Bible.* Let the old-fashioned book-maker compile laboriously, and classify, and codify, every scrap of Scripture language which can be made to exhibit the shape of a promise, yet the book would not meet *all* needs of man's life. So far as finding an explicit and applicable "text" goes, many an emergency may arise which does not readily range itself under any of the categories for which corresponding promises have been selected. There *is* something—if not exactly "a text"—in the many-sided, perfect Word of God for every heart in every demand which its life makes. But if it should not be at once, or readily to be found, at least there is something in God. His very nature and character are a fruitful ground of new promises. If it were so, that an absolutely unique and novel need had arisen, not provided with its discoverable written promise in the storehouse of the Bible, the heart might turn with its need to God. The certain, prompt, sufficient response of the heart of God would be, as it were, a new promise coined at the instant. A promise is His will expressing itself toward the cry of man's need. The up-leaping of His ready heart and will towards the soul that seeks Him with its appeal for help, is an offer of help, a promise of it. The heart of the promise-making God bears within itself, and brings forth on the occasion, an infinite wealth of new "promises." In all this He is the God the highest expression, and the most complete, of Whose will and heart toward mankind is Christ. Which leads to

III. **Christ the great Promise and the Ratification of all other promises besides.**—1. "*How many . . . be the promises,*" they are all in Him. All approach of God to man has always, and only, been in Christ. He is the Condition *sine quâ non* of all intercourse between God and man, *in both directions.* In Him God has approached man, has offered to man, has promised to man, not so much this or that gift or grace or mercy or help, as in effect all gifts, all grace, all mercy and help. The whole attitude of God toward redeemed Humanity is "bodily-wise" (Col. ii. 9) expressed and exhibited in Him Whose significant name is "Immanuel." A God in His holiness arrayed against a sinful Race in necessary antagonism, is a thing more than conceivable. A God holding aloof in supreme indifference would not be an impossibility. In point of happy fact, the God with whom our Race has had to do has been a "God *with* us." The whole attitude of God towards man, as we know Him in Christ, is a proffer and a promise, containing within it implicitly a promise for every need of man's soul. Each single promise with its fulfilment is but a particular expression of all that whole approach, that volunteered offer of **Himself**—with all the infinite "contents" of that thought—which is made in the very fact of the gift of Christ. Each single promise and its fulfilment is a detail of the one first, summarising gift and grace—**Christ.** [Rom. viii. 32 approaches this, but translating the ineffable fact into human thought with a difference, rather argues: "If He began with the greatest He had to give, He has so set the fashion and precedent of His bounty that, after that Gift, man may well expect anything. He who has given the thousands of pounds, will not hesitate to add the odd shillings and make them into guineas. After the first Gift, every smaller bounty man may need or ask, is a trifle." Here we

go beyond this.] Every new promise, and every new gift or mercy or deliverance by which it is redeemed and fulfilled, is not here conceived of as an additional act of God's bounty. It was already given in Christ. To speak in human language, it would be inconsequent, illogical, for the God Who gave "*His Son Jesus Christ*" (ver. 19), to refuse to fulfil any word of promise which may be pleaded by a soul in need of help. It would be to "go back upon" what was said and done, upon "the Word" which God uttered, when He sent His Son, "*His unspeakable Gift*," into the world. **The One Gift was in effect a Promise**; it anticipated, summarised, pledged, all subsidiary detailed promises besides; it also pledged their fulfilment. 2. So then *Christ is God's* "**Yes.**" Men come asking large things. "Is it really of any use to ask or expect so much?" they say with honest misgiving. They come asking again and again; He never denies them, but their heart wonders whether "by their continual coming they may not weary Him." They are filled with a sense of unworthiness, none more deeply than the holiest of His people: "I am not fit to come, not worthy to be heard." They have ill-employed grace given in the past: "He might justly 'upbraid' (Jas. i. 5) for our neglect or waste of past bounty." And so on, through all the round of the varying and abundant reasons for doubt, for expecting nothing. Here is one abundant reason for expecting anything, everything. Like His own "in no wise" (John vi. 37) which anticipates all difficulties, answers beforehand all disheartening "reasons," takes in every variety of case and age and sin, among the guilty souls who "*come*" to Him, so this word by anticipation silences all questions, meets all fears, replies to all misgivings, makes all unfitness and past unfaithfulness to be of no practical bearing upon the matter in hand. Is there a real need? Is there an actual promise of supply and help? That is all. Or do men half hope that they may find the heart of God to be willing, and yet hardly dare to come with much definite hope? *God has said* "**Yes**" *beforehand*, in the gift, and the very person and work, of Christ. He gave the petitioner the answer, before the petitioner brought his prayer. "*In Him is the Yea.*" 3. "*Through Him is the 'Amen.'*" Granted that a man wins his answer, has his need supplied, his promise fulfilled to him, what guarantee has he of secure enjoyment, of long possession of his blessing? The answer is once more, "**Christ.**" God's mercy in Christ both anticipates the gift, and rounds it off, when given, with a holy ratification. The same Heart which desired to give, and actually gave, desires that the gift should be kept and added to; desires, moreover, to give further grace to keep the first grace. God clenches His gift with His own "*Amen.*" If such a distinction must be made, the Spirit Himself, the Author of all strength to follow up and keep any grace given in, and for the sake of, Christ, is a gift bestowed "*through*" the Mediator-work of the Son. God's acceptance of the prayer is a very real "Amen" to it, but the following it up and sealing it by further grace, is a very real ratification of the fulfilled promise. And this is through Christ.

And as such glorious truth is preached, is it not "*to the glory of God*"?

Vers. 21, 22. *A Fourfold Grace of the Spirit.*—[Three homilies may be here suggested.]

1. **The Spirit gives strength and stability to Christian character.**—1. The figure here implied in the word is different, but the thought is the same as in "rooted and grounded" (Eph. iii. 17), "rooted and built up" (Col. ii. 7). The Christian is no "chaff driven before the wind" (Ps. i. 4); he is the "tree planted." He is no tent or frail tabernacle of boughs, easily set up, as easily struck or swept down by the violence of a storm; he is a solid and substantial

building. He is no mere "house upon the sand," but "founded upon a rock." 2. Our word here says that the grafting "*into* Christ has made *no temporary union*, nor one easily destroyed. There is strength in it; it gives strength to the character, stability and fixedness of purpose and principle and course. Men can "count upon" such a Christian. They know what to expect from him. He is a fixed quantity in all their reckoning. They know that he will always act as "a man in Christ." 3. The man is, to himself and to others, reliable. An old pastor returning to his former Church is not afraid to ask about him, lest he should have sadly to learn that he has fallen out of his place in the Church and "*in Christ.*" Rather the "tree planted" (Ps. i.), "rooted in" Christ, is like those age-old olives and terebinths of Palestinian landscape, which, amidst the ephemeral growths that clothe the hillsides for a few brief weeks after the spring rains have fallen, stand ever in the same place by "the rivers of water"; Christians once, Christians to the end. 4. In the jungle at the mouth of the Ganges are whole forests of luxuriantly growing trees whose roots spread widely, but barely take hold of the soil; the burst of the monsoon uproots them by the hundred: as the first rush of temptation or persecution sweeps down or roots up the men in Christ who are not "*stablished.*" Great havoc in some Churches is wrought by a time of sharp testing! 5. How the pyramids of Egypt sit age after age foursquare to every wind, bearing indeed the marks of years and violence, but unmoved by earthquake or time. That broad-based, immovable stability is the very ideal of the steadfastness of the Christian life; not the unstable equilibrium of the "pyramid upon its apex" or even of the beautiful but slender column. There are characters in every Church which need buttress and prop and "under-pinning"; and, when pastor and Church have done all they can for such, they never arrive at any real steadiness or stability. 6. A false idea of "humility" has often misled sincere souls in this matter. The will and grace of God, Who by His Spirit "*stablished us in Christ*" have, without intention, been dishonoured. Men have expected to fall, at least "occasionally." They have supposed that only spiritual pride or presumption could claim to have stood firm for a whole day, or still less for a whole week or year. It has been deemed "humble" to understate, when bearing testimony, the measure of strength and stability which the Spirit of God has actually wrought in them. But God's Spirit deserves the credit of all He has wrought; other souls need the testimony to encourage and hearten them to expect larger possibilities, a keeping and a strength not unworthy of the grace of God. If only all the glory be given to "*God Who stablisheth,*" the man in Christ cannot expect, or get, and testify to, too much of stability. 7. Or conceive of it as the strength of full and healthy life; the strength of a branch in a healthy vine, of a vigorous limb in a healthy body; the stability of a strength-bringing, life-giving, lifelong union to Christ. 8. Also the connection between the steadiness of union with Christ, and steadiness of belief in the great doctrines which are of the foundation of the Faith, is of the closest. The settled experience does something to give or to keep a settled faith. The great doctrines of the Christian Gospel are by no means matters of correct knowledge only, even on such supremely important themes; they are translated into experience in every spiritual man. When he speaks of or engages in discussion or controversy about the Atonement or the Trinity, it is not chiefly his creed that is in question, but his very life. The articles of his Creed are the elements of his life; really "vital" points. The man who year after year is steadily "*in Christ*" is at this immense advantage in controversy, that with a growing, experimental knowledge he knows the

great foundation truths of Christianity to be *truths* indeed. He is a witness, and his testimony cannot readily be shaken. He himself is not easily "shaken in mind, nor troubled neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter" (2 Thess. ii. 2). With "an experience," he may, if need require, hear or read what would grievously unsettle many souls. He is "*stablished.*"

II. **The Spirit gives an "anointing."**—1. The foundation of this frequently asserted truth is laid deep in the community, the unity of Christ and His people. He is *par excellence* the Anointed of God. It is His Name as Messiah. All that anointing meant in history, and symbol, and ritual in Israel; all that it meant to king or priest to receive the outpouring of the sacred oil,—that it meant in pre-eminent fulness of meaning to Him. "He is anointed . . . *above* His fellows" (Heb. i. 9; [Ps. xlv. 7]) indeed, but they are "His fellows," in this as in all besides. The "thing is true in Him and in them" (1 John ii. 8). It is one of the many instances where New Testament language, used of the *Incarnate* Son of God, may be applied to and used by the "*adopted*" (Rom. viii. 15) "sons of God." In a very pregnant sense they too are "Christs"; anointed ones, like Him. "*Ye* have an unction from the Holy One" (1 John ii. 27).

2. *They have a very real "priesthood,"* not in heaven only [Rev. i. 6, if this be not retrospective; but see again v. 10, and (? in the opposite direction) xx. 6], but on earth. They fulfil better, though not perfectly, the ideal which was scarcely more than a beautiful ideal in ancient Israel; they are a "kingdom of priests" [Exod. xix. 6; which Peter expounds correctly as "a royal priesthood" (1 Eph. iii. 9)], *i.e.* a royal dynasty, every one of whom is a priest. The gift of the Holy Ghost is the privilege and the endowment of their high character and function amongst men and toward God.

3. *Their "royalty" is one of dignity of character, rather than of function.* "Royal" because their Father is King. So far as they may be said to rule mankind, it is by moral force and by the power of ideas. So far as each Christian man is so "filled with the Holy Ghost and power" that he moves in and out amongst his fellows, in the home, or the world, or the Church, a power to repress evil and banish it by his very presence, and a power to encourage good to declare itself and be bold in the assurance of his support; so far is he king. [The artisan in the workshop, the medical student in the dissecting-room, the clerk in the office, the very schoolboy in the playground, who so bear themselves that foul language or foul doing or selfishness are ashamed in their presence, and hide themselves or are silenced, are in their circle in virtue of the royalty of holiness true kings. "The meek shall inherit the earth." What a real victory and supremacy does the quiet but thorough Christian girl enjoy in many a home!] Christian ideas rule the world, and, along with that active, progressive civilisation which owes so much to, and is found in so nearly exclusive association with, Christianity, surely, though too slowly, are taking possession. So far as in the senate, in the press, in the business, in the daily labour, in the family and personal life, each Christian man is exhibiting them, and so is propagating them, and helping forward their wider predominance and sway, so far is he sharing in His Master's dominion and royal rule in the earth; in his little measure he is a king. God's modern Israel, with their sacred deposit of Christian truth, are, like ancient Israel amongst the nations, and like Him who gathers up into Himself all the characteristics of the Ideal Israel, given for "leaders and commanders to the peoples" (Isa. lv. 4). There is a very real rule over evil in their own hearts, exercised in virtue of the Spirit poured out upon them. In the dim perspective of the future the "saints shall take the

kingdom" (Dan. vii. 18); and there are mysterious suggestions of a share with Christ in the royal rule of the consummated "kingdom of God" [*e.g.* Rev. iii. 21; and, earlier, Matt. xix. 28].

Two things are to be noted. First, if the character be lost, the royalty is lost. They are only kings thus, in so far as, and so long as, the "*anointing*" rests upon them. [Saul's royalty lingered later in historical fact, but, theocratically, his royalty was gone when "the Spirit of God departed from him."] There is no caste of men to-day by birth an indefeasibly royal Israel. Secondly, *noblesse oblige*. The Christian man should live up to his character. With all humility will he wear his honour, because it is all of grace; but he has an honour to wear, and in his friendships, his pleasures, his business, every occupation of his life, should remember that there are things this Divine "royalty" cannot do, places to which it cannot go, there is company which it cannot keep, there are friends which it may not choose to cultivate. If one of this royal race will persist in forgetting his high honour, he will grieve, and may grieve away, the Spirit Whose anointing is his patent of royal dignity.

4. *Their priesthood is one of function.*—For a special purpose the Law "came in beside," came in episodically (Rom. v. 20), in the course of the development of God's ideas. Its specialised priesthood was a necessity, and relatively a good thing. Absolutely it was a retrogression from the more perfect ideal of a priesthood, which belonged to manhood, though in patriarchal days it was accidentally and prudentially localised in the father of the family or the head of the tribe. Still, the idea was not forgotten in Israel. Not to quote again Exod. xix. 6, the slaying of the Passover lamb by the head of the family was contemplated as a permanent point of the Passover ritual, and the lamb was a true sacrifice, though not that alone; it had other meanings also. Prophets like Samuel or Elijah might offer their sacrifices, though in, *e.g.*, Samuel's days these were priests fully appointed. David once wore the ephod of the priesthood (2 Sam. vi. 14); and there is no need to reconstruct the religious history of Israel in order to account for 2 Sam. viii. 18, where David's sons are called "priests" [so literally, Heb.]. The older, wider, patriarchal idea of priesthood, and the true priesthood of every Israelite—perfectly valid, although, as a matter of convenient and didactically serviceable arrangement, it had been concentrated in a special, representative order of men chosen out of one tribe—made it possible for at least a titular honorary priesthood to be conferred upon the king's sons. The analogy of all this to the priesthood of Christian men is exceedingly close. The ministerial and teaching office is seen, *e.g.*, in 1 Cor. xiv., early to have begun to specialise and localise itself in particular men amongst the whole body of believers. But this means no "clerical" caste in the Church; it is but a prudential and, as things are, salutary, necessary concentration of a ministry belonging to every believer. And there is no "priestly" caste at all which has any office or prerogative that may not on occasion, at the call of God, be exercised by any member of a Church. It would be an ill day for any Church when the ministry was recruited only from the families of the ministry; when ministers' sons should, in any degree as a matter of course, "take up their fathers' profession." So, too, every "lay preacher," and in lower degree every Sunday-school teacher, every one who speaks to a soul for Christ, keeps up the needful protest that the teaching, saving function is no special right of any clerical order. (As to woman's part in public worship, see under 1 Cor. xiv. 34.) In the Christian Church manhood-priesthood is again the order; the original order, obscured by the episodic priesthood and ritual of Mosaic Law, is now once more brought into prominence and use. The priesthood

is inherent in every "*anointed*," every "*spiritual*," man.

5. *With one marked and emphatic reservation.*—Christ does not share with His people *the atoning work* of His priesthood. He alone makes atonement for guilt. Needing to make none for Himself [unlike the old High Priest (Heb. ix. 7)], He reserves to Himself the offering of the one sacrifice "for sins for ever" [query, better connect "for ever" with "sat down" (Heb. x. 12)]. The Christian year has become one long "Day of Atonement"; the yearly cycle of the old sacrificial order has gathered itself up into one, *the* Sin-offering of that Day, now made perpetual after the one first and final consummation upon the Cross. And, as of old, the sacrifice and its presentation in our Christian Day of Atonement are the unshared act and honour of our High Priest. A guilty conscience, or a heart full of fear, must look to, and rely on, Him and His good offices alone. Guilty souls have "their access unto the Father" only by Him (Eph. ii. 8, iii. 12; Heb. iv. 14, 16).

6. *But, with that exception, His people share His priesthood.*—(1) In a very true sense their *intercession* for the world around them is effectual for the world's great blessing. If the Church ceased to pray for the world, or were removed from out of it altogether; if the world were left to its own evil, godless heart (Eph. ii. 8), the very world itself would account it no small calamity and curse. The Church says, as did Samuel of Saul, "God forbid that I should sin in ceasing to pray for you" (1 Sam. xii. 23). One of the most precious prerogatives of the manhood priesthood of the "*anointed*" believer is "to make prayers and supplications, and to give thanks for all men," etc. (1 Tim. ii. 1-4). God would have all men saved; the Church of God should never cease to have a heart with a world-wide outlook and yearning. Priesthood should mean no aloofness or exalted separateness from the general mass; the truest priesthood means the closest brotherhood, the most intimate nearness. Christ in heaven, His people on earth, interceding for the world,—in that is the world's hope. Every Christian priest may covet and cultivate, as part of his "*anointing*" for his office, the fulness of "the Spirit of grace and supplication" (Zech. xii. 10). A noble work, open to the simplest, poorest, humblest; and very mighty are some such in every Church in their pleading, interceding prevalence with God. (2) Several passages bring out other typical characteristics of the priesthood of "*anointed*" believers; *e.g.* 1 Pet. ii. 5, "*To offer up spiritual sacrifices*," *i.e.* sacrifices which are not, as aforetime and now in heathenism, things fleshly or material at all. They present themselves before God with hearts full, *e.g.*, of praise ["whoso *offereth* praise," Ps. l. 23]. Any material gift is valueless unless it embody and express a "*spiritual*" sacrifice. No point more needful for the Christian priest to note and guard than this. The heart always gravitates towards the material; it is easier to bring the gift than the heart. [1 Sam. xv. 22, where "*better than*" means that "*sacrifice*," be it never so costly, abundant, slavish in its devotion, is of no value without "*obedience*."] Heb. xiii. 15 well comments on this: "By Him [*i.e.* Christ; our praises, as our prayers, can only come up to God in virtue of His mediation] let us offer the sacrifice of praise continually, that is, the fruit of our lips [cf. Hosea xiv. 2, which anticipates this thought, the "calves of our lips"], giving thanks to ["making confession to," margin and R.V.] His name." Every anointed priest has his temple, with its altar of this incense, within his own heart. Within him is a shrine in whose holy secrecy there may go on the perpetual offering of a man who "prays without ceasing, and in everything gives thanks." Paul is a priest at an altar in Phil. ii. 17, but with another kind of offering. His offering, his sacred service, is the body of Philippian believers, or, more exactly, their "*faith*," which, by the blessing of his

Master, he can bring and show as the fruit of his work in Philippi. He asks his Master's gracious acceptance of their "believing" life and character. His life is in danger; any day may see him brought to trial; the issue may be death. If his Master ask his life as the crowning act of a career of self-devotion, well and good. Paul is more than content; he will "rejoice" to pour out—as (in heathen phrase) a libation, or (in Hebrew ritual order) a drink-offering—by the altar, or even as it were "over the sacrifice" which he brings and lays upon it, his very life. The type of a "*priesthood*" fulfilled by many a busy, fruitful toiler, whose life may not, indeed, have issued in a technical "martyrdom," but which has not less really been "spent and spent out" over the work, accumulated results of which are the offering with which he appears at the altar before his Lord. Unhappy that "priest" whose "*anointing*" has been practically in vain, and who appears before God empty-handed, having no fruit to show, nothing to lay upon the altar for acceptance and reward. Rom. xii. 1 takes up the self-devotion which perhaps culminates in some day of martyrdom, but which in every case will have been the keynote of the whole life, the great foundation principle of it all: "Present yourselves a living sacrifice." [So the text is naturally quoted, with a perfectly correct appreciation of its force. But there is terrible point and force in "present *your bodies*." Paul's readers were only too familiar with fact that (as in some Oriental *cults* of to-day) women—"sacred slaves"—and even men, literally "presented their bodies" to the divinity of a temple, and enriched its treasury with the proceeds of abominable and unnameable lusts. "Present your bodies . . . a sacrifice . . . *holy*." Heathen sin often ran into sensual sin; the fact in part gives a colour and emphasis to Paul's use of the phrase "the flesh" (see under vii. 1); his exhortation here is but the summary of many an injunction such as Rom. vi. 12, 13, xiii. 14. Heathen sin had showed itself most obviously open to observation and censure, in fleshly sins; Christian holiness would most obviously begin and would be appreciable in a sanctification of the very body itself. "Present your *bodies*."] The man who thus "presents his body" has first offered much more; he has devoted *himself*. The offering of the body is the act of a man who is himself an offering, and is himself the priest who presents it. And such a daily, detailed consecration (John xvii. 19) of self and activities and life—needs a perpetual "*anointing*." It is the offering of a man "filled with the Spirit." In the Old Testament, Samuel was an early and beautiful example of a life thus wholly given to do nothing and to be nothing except for the Lord, its Tabernacle, its service. His mother "presented his body," presented her boy, as her offering to the Lord. Nor, we may believe, did he go back from the spirit and the terms of his mother's gift ["I have returned him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent unto the Lord" (1 Sam. i. 28)], when he came out from "dwelling in the house of the Lord" (Ps. xxiii. 6) into the busy life of practical government, and into the "secularities" of the life of a family and household. The happy days spent in ceaseless ministration in the tabernacle with Eli were days of a "*living* sacrifice." Happy those on whom rests continually the Spirit's "*anointing*" for this form of priestly function. John xvii. 19, above quoted, brings such a life into very close parallelism to that of "God's Anointed One." Is not He—are not His people—both Sacrifice and Priests?

III. **The Spirit is a "seal" and an "earnest."**—Upon this word "*sealed*," thus simply introduced and left for the pondering of the Corinthians, we may cast the illumination of Paul's fuller explanation of his thought in Eph. iv. 30, itself lighted up, as Ephesian listeners on whose ears the word fell for the first time would instinctively light it up, by i. 13, 14. Indeed,

Eph. i. 14 is only a little fuller statement of what is, evidently, from its occurrence here, a sample of Paul's habitual thought about the work of the Holy Spirit.

1. *The "seal" is a person, the same Divine Person Who is the "earnest."*—Eph. iv. 30 contributes to make that clear. We might not infer very much from the word "grieve," if it were an isolated turn of phraseology; though, whilst one could speak, not unnaturally, of "resisting" or of "yielding to" an influence or a personified Force, it would not be as natural to speak of "grieving" it. Poetically one might speak of "obeying" a force; but men "grieve" a person. But the expression is not isolated. It is a sample case of a whole group of New Testament terms of expression, beginning with John xv., xvi., which assume, imply, and so indicate, a personal Holy Spirit. Men not infrequently can gather with utter certainty—very frequently in a court of justice will a shrewd counsel do so—from a passing phrase or a single word, spoken or written, what is in the mind of the speaker or writer, though he did not intend it to be discovered. Very often may be thus inferred a man's habitual opinion upon a topic. When the disciples in the upper room heard Jesus speaking of "the other" Comforter, repeatedly say, "He," "Himself," "Whom," they could only believe that to their Teacher the Comforter was not some*thing*, but some*body*, another personal Friend for them comparable to Himself. [The geologist may find a deep lying and extensive stratum "crop up" at the surface, only in one very narrow area. He follows the indication of the one single narrow spot, and finds the vast beds beneath. The silver mines of Peru were discovered because, where a dislodged rock had rested, an Indian noticed the shining metal showing.] In Paul's word "grieve" there is the cropping up of a great underlying and extensive and precious truth, the personality of the "*sealing*" Spirit.

2. *The sealing has been done in view of a "day of redemption," i.e.* of "*the redemption of the purchased possession.*"—Thus is the matter viewed from the side of Him Who "*seals.*" Viewed from our side who are the "*sealed*" persons, that "day of redemption" is the day of coming into "*our inheritance*" (Eph., *ubi supr.*). The "purchased possession" is God's or Christ's (Acts xx. 28). The "inheritance" is that of His people. When in "the Day" He enters into full possession, they enter into possession also. (1) Man's "day of redemption" was the Friday of Calvary; Christ's "day of redemption" is in the future. (See the fuller, future sense of "redemption" in 1 Cor. i. 30.) On the cross, *for man's sake*, was Christ with His own blood "paying down the price" [an expression which has hardly more than this one point of contact and analogy with the fact] of man's freedom from the results of the curse and penalty of sin. *For His own sake* He was also paying down the purchase money for a "peculiar people" [1 Pet. ii. 9, lit. "a people of possession"], an Israel which, in a world where all are "His own," should be His "very own" acquired for Himself, specially precious to His heart. In the manward aspect of the "redemption," it was complete at Calvary, when He said "It is finished." Yet all that He intended "redemption" to include, will not be fulfilled until, in the resurrection morning, the very body itself stands, like the whole redeemed Manhood, freed from the latest trace and touch of the curse of sin. In the Godward, Christward aspect, "redemption" will not be complete till the whole company of those whose faith in His atoning death turned their "redemption" into "salvation," stand thus gloriously complete by His side in their "inheritance,"—that "of the saints in light" (Col. i. 12). [Roughly illustrate by the purchase in the factory of a vase of costly marble, which is as yet in the rough. Price paid, purchase complete, ownership absolute; but a sense in which the purchaser does not

regard possession or ownership realised until the finished vessel is safely delivered at his home. Or the buyer in the cattle market chooses, pays for, becomes the owner of, sheep from the "pens" of several sellers. Ownership is "finished" before he leaves the market. But in a very real sense he looks *forward* to a completed and finished ownership, when at last the selected sheep have all been brought safely home. The purchase was "finished," the sheep were "his own," in the market; the purchase is not "finished," the flock are not assuredly and in fulness of possession his own, until they are safe in the home-fold; the two "redemptions."] The presence and work of the Spirit is a significant thing for the present of our religious life, but it is significant also—to Christ and to His people, both—for the future "day" and its hope. It is the buyer's mark of ownership put upon the sheep he has purchased. It is "the broad-arrow," the "*seal*" of the King, stamped upon, to identify and to claim, His own purchased "vessel." (2) To His people themselves it is the "*earnest*," *i.e. a pledge*, of some future good, *which consists in a sample* of that "good" (Rom. viii. 28). It is the shilling given to the recruit as the first money of his future pay. It is the deposit paid on account towards the fuller payment of a completed bargain. It is, more exactly in analogy with the fact illustrated, the maintenance paid to the minor under his father's will, until he comes of age, and the whole estate is at his disposal and enjoyment. The life and grace and work of the Spirit now within the Christian man, are the sample, the first taste, the beginnings, of the fuller life of "*the inheritance*" when it comes. That life hereafter and this life here are not two, but one. This is the eternal life. The division line between the old and the new is not before the Christian, located at death or judgment; it is behind him, located at conversion. Then began one life which has become his true life, the natural life having become a subsidiary one, which soon drops off and leaves the eternal life to go on into eternity with unbroken continuity. Further, the fact of this life binds the Divine Giver of it to complete His gift hereafter. "Our hope" does not leave us by-and-by to wake up befooled, deceived, "ashamed," "*because* the love of God is shed abroad *in our hearts* [so here] by the Holy Ghost given unto us" [Rom. v. 5; the whole argument of "*an earnest*"]. If on the Christian's own part there be faithfulness, kept up in the grace which is itself part of the "*earnest*," there will also be, there is pledged, a faithfulness on the part of God. Having given the Spirit, He cannot go back and withhold the "inheritance." The sample binds Him. "Will He give me 'glory'?" "Yes; He has given me 'grace.'"

3. *Similarly, the seal is in no arbitrary or accidental connection* with the completed ownership and full possession by Christ towards which it points. A seal very commonly bears the initials, it may bear the image, of him whose seal it is. The presence and work of the Spirit of God "*in our hearts*" are restoring "the image of God"; they ought to bring out "a conformity to the image of God's Son" (Rom. viii. 29). Christlikeness, inwrought, brought out, by the Spirit, is, to others and to the man himself, the seal. The argument of ownership thus lies upon the surface: "The man belongs to Christ, for he is like Christ, getting more like Him day by day." When Christ comes to get His own together, the "Firstborn" (Rom., *ubi supr.*) will look for and claim the "many brethren" in whom there shows that family likeness of which He is the first and best exponent. Thus, then, the "seal" may be lost; the earnest may be forfeited. They—it, the complex, and yet one, blessing—are grace imparted, maintained, only by the ceaselessly renewed gift and indwelling of the Personal Spirit of God "*in our hearts*."

## HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

Ver. 11. *Two Features in the Life of Citizens of the Kingdom of God.*

I. **"Circulation" in the life of the kingdom of God.**—The cycle of life begins in, and returns to, prayer. "Prayer" first wins a "Gift"; then, the "Gift" won, and exhibited in its blessed fruits, calls out "Praise." Then the grateful, adoring Church begins the round again: making known its fresh requests once more; again getting the new answer; and then again acknowledging the mercy with new Praise. [Observe how the objective efficacy of Prayer is here assumed; prayer which is petition, and not merely adoration, contemplation, communion, with God, etc. Prayer—the consentaneous prayer of many persons—prevails, not only to their own blessing, but to secure for another person, Paul, not merely a spiritual grace, but an actual deliverance from very extreme peril.]

II. **Union in the life of the kingdom.**—The gift is bestowed in answer to the prayers of many; the thanks are given by many; many then help together in praying for the new deliverance. 1. There is solitary prayer which is of the mightiest; there is an offering of thanksgiving, in the holy privacy of the sanctuary within the heart, which is grateful exceedingly to God, but is a holy secret between the heart and Himself. But united prayer has a power all its own; united thanksgiving has a beauty and value all its own. [Cf. the strong figure in Rom. xv. 30: "that ye strive [wrestle, agonise] together with me in your prayers for me." As though, not one "wrestling Jacob," but a Church every member of which is a "wrestling Jacob," had all taken hold of, and were hanging upon, God, with "We will not let Thee go."] 2. No Church is strong unless its individual members are strong, for prayer and for work. It is in secret prayer that they learn to pray. But the Church, meeting as such, for prayer and for thanksgiving, has a mighty power. United waiting upon God brought Pentecost; united waiting upon God had secured "*deliverance*" for Paul. There is a principle in the *Church* prayer meeting; a special promise belongs to it (Matt. xviii. 19). 3. The missionary agents of the Churches, in difficulty and peril, should be remembered in Church prayer, and thanksgiving rendered for their "gift" and mercy. [4. All the efficacy of Sympathy is utilised by such united prayer and thanksgiving; the Church does well to have its *thanksgiving* meetings, as well as its prayer meetings; sluggish hearts are stirred, flagging interest in one is aroused by zeal in another; beginners learn to pray, and learn to discover matter for praise, as they listen to the older and more experienced members.] [Further, remember that this "agreeing to ask" is very much more than that a given number of persons, all convinced that some certain object of desire is laudable or needful, concur in making request for the same thing. It goes deeper; it is a union of conviction and desire and petition, born of the common presence in each of them of One and the Same Spirit of prayer. They are one in the Body and in the Head. It is the one Mind, Life, Heart, of the Body breathing out its desire through each of the company who "agree to ask." ("Prayer in the Holy Ghost," Jude 20.)]

Ver. 12. *The Testimony of Our Conscience.*—[A companion, complementary, "witness" to that of the Spirit of God (Rom. viii. 16).]

I. **What is this conscience?**—1. We are made *conscious* beings, and can perceive things past and present relating to ourselves, both tempers and outward behaviour. But *conscience* implies somewhat more: its main business is to accuse or excuse, to approve or disapprove, to acquit or condemn. By some called "*moral sense.*" Scripturally it is: "A faculty

or power, implanted by God in every soul which comes into the world, of perceiving what is right or wrong in his own heart or life, in his tempers, thoughts, words, and actions." 2. The rule of conscience is (1) for heathens, "the law written in their hearts" (Rom. ii. 14, 15); (2) for Christians, the Word of God, the writings of the Old and New Testament; the purpose of which is stated in 2 Tim. iii. 16. "He esteems nothing good, but what is here enjoined, either directly or by plain consequence; nothing evil, but what is here forbidden, either in terms, or by undeniable inference. Whatever the Scripture neither forbids nor enjoins either directly or by plain consequence, he believes . . . indifferent, . . . in itself neither good nor evil; this being the whole and sole outward rule whereby his conscience is to be directed in all things."

II. 1. **The testimony of conscience,** —If (as here) approving, depends upon (1) a right understanding of the Rule, the Word of God; (2) a knowledge of ourselves; (3) an agreement of our life, inward and outward, with the rule; and (4) an inward perception of this agreement. "This habitual perception, this inward consciousness itself, is properly *a good conscience.*" 2. This presumes a moral basis, "a spiritual condition," a saving faith in Christ, which gives the "evidence" of Heb. xi. 1, accompanied by love "shed abroad in the heart," and the fulfilment in us of Heb. viii. 10.

III. **The matter of the testimony.**— 1. Briefly, "*our conversation*"; this "*in the world,*" even that of the ungodly; "*in simplicity,*" all the actions and conversation full of the light of heaven, love, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost, the eye of the mind steadily, singly, fixed upon God; "*simplicity*" in intention, "*godly sincerity*" in the execution of it, much more than *heathen* sincerity; "*not with fleshly wisdom,*" not by the force of good sense, good nature, good breeding; this is only attained to "*by the grace of God.*" 2. This is the ground of "*our rejoicing.*" "Our" joy is no natural joy, or physical lightness of spirits; nor the joy of ignorance of the law which is broken; nor that of a dull or callous conscience. It is the joy of holy love and happy obedience.—*Wesley,* "*Sermons,*" xii.

Ver. 15. *Benefit* (= "Grace").

To have the Gospel and its ministers is—

I. An unspeakable benefit.

II. One not easily exhausted. ["A second."]

III. One to be diligently improved. —[*J. L.*]

For vers. 23, 24, see under chap. ii.

Vers. 15-18. *A Christian Man's Promises* are:—

I. **Sincere.**—Duly considered in the making; carefully worded (ver. 14, "ye read"); honestly intended.

II. **Held binding.**—In the sight of God; in spite of inconvenience and self-sacrifice.

III. **May sometimes be superseded.** —By higher obligations; by circumstances beyond his control.—[*J. L.*]

[Of God's promises III. is *never true*! The "*Amen*" of completed fulfilment always crowns the "*Yes*" of the initial promise!]

Ver. 17. *A Christian Man's Steadfastness of Purpose.*

I. **What it includes.**—*Due consideration;* the purpose must not be lightly formed. *Conscientious prosecution;* it may not be lightly given up. This does not exclude the propriety of a change of mind under the force of new and imperative circumstances. [So the true immutability of God does not consist in His never altering His course of action, or what, speaking humanly, looks like changing his purpose toward the man; but in His never changing the principles of His dealing with men, with sin, with holiness. If the man changes, then God, remaining in Himself unchanged, must deal otherwise with him than before.]

II. **Upon what it ought to rest.**—Not on worldly considerations. ["Not with fleshly wisdom."] "According to the flesh." Not on the mere force of human will [this may be only pride or obstinacy], but on Christian principle.

III. **Why it is necessary.**—As an essential of Christian character. As a foundation of human confidence.—[*J. L.*]

Ver. 23. *An Apostle's Word confirmed by an Oath.*

I. Under what circumstances an oath admissible?

II. How reconcile with "swear not at all"?

III. What is "profane swearing," therefore?—[*J. L.*]

[Be a Yea, Yea, Nay, Nay, man; but not a Yea, Nay, Yea, Nay, man.]

## CHAPTER II.

### *CRITICAL NOTES.*

(*N.B.—The paragraph really begins at* i. 23.)

Ver. 1. **Determined.**—As in 1 Cor. ii. 2. **For myself.**—So R.V., meaning, "For my own sake as well as for yours." **Again.**—To be linked with "*come*" only? (*q.d.* "To come again, and to have a sorrowful visit"); or with "*with sorrow*"? (*q.d.* "a second sorrowful visit," like a former one). Answer variously given, according as an intermediate visit, unmentioned in the Acts, is not, or is, supposed. Agreed that the visit recorded in Acts xviii. was not specially a sorrowful visit. **In heaviness.**—"*With sorrow*" (R.V.). Here also external considerations very much decide whether this shall mean, "with sorrow in my heart" or "to inflict sorrow on you." [See Introduction, more fully.]

Ver. 2. **He that is made sorry.**—Probably not the particular offender of these verses; but quite general. Paul can grieve them *all*; *each one* of them, thus grieved, must make him glad. Ver. 3 confirms this.

Ver. 3. **This very thing.**—Viz. 1 Cor. v. 1 *sqq.* (Waite, in *Speaker*, however, thinks rather the decision announced in ver. 1.) Paul means, "*I wrote*, rather than come at once."

Ver. 4.—Another concurrent and quite consistent reason, "I wrote *with tears*, in order that," etc.

Ver. 5.—Very difficult to translate with any certainty. Ambiguous for two reasons: (1) What does "*in part*" belong to? Answer not certainly clear; (2) What is the grammatical object of "overcharge," "overweight"? Answer again not certainly clear. (2) is answered in opposite ways by the R.V. and A.V., the two being typical of many more commentators. So is (1). The A.V. means, "The grief has not fallen entirely and only upon me, but on you also. Not to think so, would on my part be to charge upon you all the heavy sin of indifference to his sin." R.V. means, "But in part (let me say)—not to make too grave a matter of it against him—he has grieved you all." Four variants are supported:

"He hath not grieved me
"but in part; that I may not overcharge you all."
"but in part, that I may not overcharge (him), you all."
"but in part, that I may not overcharge you, all (of you)."
"but in part, that I may not overcharge all, you."

Ver. 6.—Note, "*the* many" (R.V.). The sentence was the act of a (voting) majority.

Ver. 7.—Note "*His . . . sorrow.*" R.V. accurately.

Ver. 9.—How many, perfectly true, concurrent, motives go to one act.

Ver. 10.—He concurs in what the majority had, previously to his writing, determined; "*concurs*" surely is not the spirit of one who "played the Lord" over them (i. 24). Choose between "*presence*" and "*person.*" [The homiletics that follow assume "*person,*" because of Matt. xviii. 20.]

Ver. 11.—Beet makes more of Satan's endeavouring to compass some harm, not to the poor penitent offender, but, by means of him, and using him and other evil circumstances of their case, to the Church. Unwise discipline, and tolerated evil within, perhaps equally give an open door to the adversary of souls. [Cf. 1 Cor. vii. 5 for the need of wise watchfulness against a real, evil Personality, full of very wise "*devices.*"] But preferable to understand as of Satan directly seeking opportunity of harming the penitent man.

Ver. 12. **Troas.**—Acts xx. 1-6. Note R.V., "*for the Gospel*," literally exact. **Door.**—Cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 9, and material there.

Ver. 13.—See Homily, "Conqueror; Captives; Incense." Assumed in the homiletics, with most, that, although festive processions in honour of Bacchus are closely connected with the earliest root of the word "*triumph*," yet the word had been borrowed and was in common use for the triumph of a victorious Roman general; which Roman triumph, moreover, alone supplies the figure with the touch of "*incense*." [See these points, and nearly all others, dealt with in the various homilies which follow.] Cf. Luke xx. 18. "Men must build *with* the Stone, or be crushed *beneath* it." Also Luke ii. 24. "This Child is set . . . for the fall and for the rising again of many." Men fall, or rise, whenever they come into contact with Christ in a faithful Gospel. [Happily, all who rise have first "fallen." The "fall" is the first thing. Men *may do both*; they *must*, in order to a full salvation.] The triumph of Memmius, a century earlier, after the sack of Corinth, had been a very remarkable and famous triumph, certain to be in the minds of Paul's readers.

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Chap.* i. 23—ii. 11.

*Paul and the Now Penitent Offender of* 1 *Cor. v.* 1-5.

**I. The penitent man is an instructive study.**—1. The interval had been brief since chap. v. of the former letter was written, and from that brief interval must be deducted the time from writing until it was read at Corinth, and from the time of the man's manifest repentance until the news of this reached Paul in Ephesus. But in the brief interval, thus narrowed, had occurred a marvellous, a revolutionary, moral change in the man,—from a form of fornication abhorrent even to Corinthian heathen ideas, to repentance so deep, that he who was to have been "delivered to Satan," might now safely be restored to the Church and to Christ. And not the least remarkable point in the case is that a man living in such sin, apparently with as little sense as had some of his fellow-members, of the shame it brought upon the Church, should, by the very fact of the Church having laid upon him a "*sufficient*" "*punishment*" [though (*perhaps*) one something short of the full penalty prescribed in the former letter; his alarm and repentance may have been so quick and so genuine that the need for this was averted], have been so filled with "*sorrow*," that there was danger of a true penitent being driven to despair, and (we may say?) "*delivered to Satan*" by the very "*overmuch*" of his grief. 2. The case is not an uncommon one in mission-fields in heathen countries, or even in "home mission" work amongst the lowest or the degraded population of a nominally Christian land; and, as one of the typical, didactic instances by which, rather than by abstract discussions or elaborate theses upon given topics, God has been pleased to reveal His thought, it has many divinely authoritative suggestions. For example, it reminds us how widely the degrees of moral enlightenment and of moral sensitiveness may differ, whilst yet there is equally a relation to Christ which, though gravely imperilled by the sin, is worth caring for and endeavouring to strengthen. In a Christian land, in circles where Christian standards of morality have largely influenced even "society" ethics, such a sin as this of the Corinthian offender is reprobated with the utmost weight of verbal and practical censure; whilst a persistent refusal to forgive a fellow-Christian for a comparatively small offence, is hardly condemned at all. No doubt a practical difficulty occurs in judging of a sin "of spirit" (vii. 1); it is not easy to verify the facts, as can be done in (say) a palpable lapse into sensuality; it is not easy to pronounce judgment upon the moral worth of often very complex "feelings" [no virtue, and no sin, is single; all is complex]; whereas a plain act, manifestly incompatible with the most elementary law of God, can be both verified and judged. But this should not so affect our estimate of sin, as to make us forget that for a reclaimed drunkard to fall back grossly into his old sin, or for a man saved from profanity to break out, like Peter, in oaths and imprecations, or for a heathen, half in habit and heedlessness, to be led back into

some gross but customary sin of his old life, may argue less of downright evil of heart than for a professedly Christian man persistently to cherish envy or pride, or to indulge in evil-speaking, or to become thoroughly of the world, in principle and spirit, in aims and affections. Remembering the men, remembering the history of the men, their opportunities, their surroundings, the worldliness of the one may be a more grievous "fall" than the gross sin of the other. [The one is certainly as little compatible with the perfect law of life in Christ as is the other, the open and gross.] Our relative estimate of sin and of sinners needs continually reviewing in the light of that holiness which condemns sins "of the flesh" and "of the spirit" with at least equal censure. Rebellion in Saul may be more than the witchcraft in some wretched hag of Endor; stubbornness in Saul may be a worse sin than that idolatry which he had prosecuted in others with a Puritan rigour (1 Sam. xv. 23). Sin may not be extenuated. [Certainly, even consummate genius must not excuse sensualism and impurity, in poetry or art, or laxity in morals.] An Ananias and a Sapphira may so deliberately and distinctly "lie unto the Holy Ghost" (Acts v. 3), that there is for them no forgiveness, and nothing but excision from the body [query Gal. v. 12] is on all accounts possible. Such discipline, sharp and swift, may be the only means of educating a pure public opinion in the Church, and for teaching a man of low type like the fornicator at Corinth to see himself as others see him, and as God sees him and his sin. An objective conscience, thus forcing its decision upon the attention of the wrong-doer, may be the only awakener and educator of his own. But "Father, forgive them, for they know what they do," is high authority for a tender handling of some whose actual sin is flagrant and open. They *needed* forgiving, but their ignorance left the door open for forgiveness. Their guilt who actually, and perhaps with some coarse delight in giving pain, drove in the nails, was not so great as that of Caiaphas, who stood by, laying not a finger of his unsoiled hands upon the Sacred Sufferer, yet who in his heart was perhaps more truly than any other one man there present His real murderer. There is more grace in the repentance of a Corinthian fornicator, than in the largely conventional purity of some English or American "Christians." There is more to love in the repentant prodigal, with all his "riotous living" and the waste of his patrimony, than in the grudging elder brother, whose life is blameless, save for the one lifelong sin of a loveless heart. This Corinthian sinned grossly, but he repented graciously. The sin needed every word of sternest rebuke which Paul had written; the fair name of the Church, and of Christ, must at all costs be kept clear before the world. If there had been no repentance, then the mysterious penalty of "*deliverance to Satan*" must righteously have been enforced to its uttermost of consequence [though even this contemplated the "saving of the spirit" (1 Cor. v. 5)]. But gross and unexampled as was this man's sin, there was much grace in a man, and hope for a man, who so promptly and unreservedly, with tears and broken heart, bowed before the censure of his pastor and his brethren, and in whom conscience was so easily awakened and so entirely obeyed. The "bruised reeds" (in Matt. xii. 14-21) were as helpless as they were evil, in the presence of the power of Jesus; the "smoking flax" of the wick of the lamp of their expiring religious life was as offensive as it was easily to be "quenched." But if the "reed" is humbled at its weakness and sin, if the "smoking flax" will bear to be rekindled, Paul loves to restore such a one. His sin was a grievous offence; yet such a gross, but easily convinced and deeply penitent offender as this man of Corinth, is not the greatest sinner, nor the hardest to win and keep or recover for Christ. *And all this not indistinctly outlines the judgment of God in Christ upon some "chief of sinners."*

II. **The "tears of" Paul.**—1. In no letter do we get so near to Paul as in this "Second" to Corinth, or see and hear his very self. And, of all the letter, this

is truer of no section more than of i. 23—ii. 11. First and foremost stand his "*tears.*" The Corinthians had imagined "a man *lording it over their faith*"; and all the while he was weeping over the loss of their love! They imagined, and maligned or decried, a self-seeking man, not above enriching himself and his companions and emissaries out of funds given to the Jerusalem poor (viii. 16-23); and all the while this "masterful," "tyrannical," "self-seeking" man was toiling at his tentmaking in Ephesus, and instead of arranging for an immediate visit was dictating to his amanuensis a letter [assuming with some that ver. 4 alludes to an intermediate, "lost" letter], because, if he were to come, he must use an Apostolic severity of power such as he was unwilling to inflict upon those whom he had led to Christ, and whom he loved as only a spiritual father loves spiritual children. The unmarried [or widower], childless Paul is as tender as a mother. "I am only happy when I see you happy; I am sure that you are only happy when I am so; I could not bear to think of your making me unhappy by your own sorrow (ver. 3); I must have used the 'rod' if I had come, and I could not bear your tears." This man, whose words thunder and flash lightnings, has written "*out of much affliction and anguish of heart*"; [and according to a strongly favoured interpretaté of i. 8-10 was quite prostrated, overburdened, broken-hearted, fit for no work, nearly killed, by the tidings of their wrong-doing and of their factious jealousy against himself]. They thought, or said, that they found a man strong, stern, to the point of hardness; we know a man tender, tearful, perhaps even constitutionally timid [so Howson suggests: *Character of St. Paul*, lecture ii.; and if so, then naturally drawn to Timothy, around whom he so often in these letters throws the arm of his guaranteeing, guarding, strengthening love], doing all he did with a great and often violent strain upon himself, and all simply in the strength of the grace of God. It is imperfect manhood that cannot weep; and if in our undemonstrative, self-repressed days, tearful *eyes* be out of fashion for men, a perfect man will have a *heart* that can weep. Strong men are tender; tender men are strong. Their very tenderness is a helpful strength to many who lean upon them. 2. And, once more, as in the case of the Penitent Wrong-doer, there comes back *the lesson to be very cautious in judgment.* Naturally it is not easy for one who is smarting under the lash, to think very kind things of him who must needs wield it. The child hardly appreciates at the moment the love or wisdom which blames sharply or punishes severely. But the love is there. Do not sit in Corinth and hastily misread as a hard man Paul weeping at Ephesus. Experience shows, as it accumulates with years, how tender a heart may guide a stern tongue or move a strong hand. [See a tender delicate "weed" springing up from between the flagstones of a courtyard. Under those cold, hard stones its roots have found, and now witness to, soft, moist soil, where it may nourish its strength. So, see a strong, rough-spoken man bending over a fallen child to pick it up, perhaps with an awkward kiss before he carries it to a place of safety. That kiss is the "weed" which tells of the tender heart underneath the stone-cold, stone-hard surface of the manner and the life. That man is not wholly bad. These few verses—even these two, 3, 4—with their "*tears*," are precious; they reveal the true Paul to us, as we should not have known him from the Acts, nor from the First Epistle to Corinth. How *many a worker must be content to go* forward year after year *misread, misjudged*, and feeling in some degree *crippled in his usefulness* by the wrong estimate formed of him by those to whom he would be useful! 3. May we not rise higher, with the suggestion of Paul's "*tears*" whilst he writes words of sharp rebuke, to help us? From Paul's tears may we not rise to the tears of Christ, and, yet higher, once more to the heart of God? By no forced or chance analogy. Paul, like every Christian man, of necessity reproduces more or less perfectly

his Pattern, because the Spirit of Christ is within him the Life of his life, the Former of his character. And "he that hath seen" Christ "hath seen the Father." We remember how Christ once at least "looked around" on a gathering in a Capernaum synagogue with a holy "anger" in His eyes (Mark iii. 5); but the sentence continues, "being *grieved* with the hardness of their hearts." The wail of disappointed love cries, "How often would I have gathered. . . . Ye would not"; but words of stern, irrevocable doom follow: "Your house is left unto you desolate." As we see them in the "Son who has revealed Him," anger and grief are never far apart in God. He has no love for inflicting pain. He has no love for the future punishment of creatures whom He has made. If it must be—if they make it a necessity—it must and will be. Holiness must be vindicated; sin is a peril to the good order, and so to the happiness, of the universe. "He must reign," even if this must mean "enemies put beneath His feet." But one can believe that there are tears in the heart of the very Judge, as He sets some "on the left hand" for whom He shed His blood. One may almost venture reverently to imagine Him following them as they "depart," with His word, "Ye would not, *ye would not*, come to Me that ye might have life!" [Can we not see in His face the sorrow of the love of Christ, as He follows with His eyes the departing young ruler, so lovable, and yet so unready for "eternal life"? (Luke xviii. 23, 24).] Men say of God, "I know Thee, that Thou art *hard*, . . . reaping where," etc. (Matt. xxv. 34). But they "*know*" God as little as the Corinthians knew Paul, the man of "*many tears*." They do not know Him, as they may see Him, if they will, in Christ.

III. **Paul the pastor.**—1. *How careful he is that his motives should be understood.* "*I call God for a record upon my soul*," etc. Quite consistent with all said above (under i. 17 *sqq.*), that his personal character, and what they thought of it and of him, were only matters of concern so far as they might be supposed to affect their estimate of the Gospel he preached, or of the Christ Who is the very heart and burden of it. And quite consistent also with the words of the Divine Legislator for "the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v. 37). Paul is not a "yes and no" man; but his word here is not simply, "Yea, yea; nay, nay." He strengthens it with an affirmation (cf. Rom. i. 9) which one could have supposed too serious for "a mere personal matter" like this, his motive in making a change in his itinerary. The Master had said, "Whatsoever is more than these"—the plain "yes" and "no"—"cometh of evil." In a world of evil, where men are evil, and where sin has put the relations of social intercourse so much out of joint, a strengthened "Yea" or "Nay" may be inevitable. And in this particular instance it is no "merely personal matter." It is for the Gospel's sake still. A pastor's good understanding with his people is to him a power which he can use for their sakes. If they distrust his character, or lose confidence in his word, he will be of little use to them. A transparent simplicity of act and word and motive will give him a hold upon their hearts, if even they question, or differ from, his judgment. But such a protest as this, such a purgation of himself on oath, is a rare thing; Paul's normal attitude is in 1 Cor. iv. 3,—"A small thing with me that I," etc. Since, however, those words were written, new circumstances had arisen, which wrung from him this protest, for his people's sake even more than for his own. Says the Great Shepherd: "I know My sheep, *and am known of Mine*!" Paul wants his flock to know him.

2. *Not a lord over faith, but a helper of joy.*—(1) They are believers; even these Corinthians are (i. 24). He is only a believer himself; in Christ, as man and man, every Corinthian and he have the same standing. Their faith is the vital link holding them to Christ; every man believes alone—by and for himself. It is his own unshared act. And the *status* in Christ is retained by believing;

it may be forfeited by sin—sin which is fatal to faith, because grieving to the Spirit by Whose help alone men do, or can, savingly believe. If not, "if we (continue to) walk in the light as He is. . . . We have fellowship, and the blood . . . cleanseth," etc.; with a continuous efficacy it puts a bar between us and our native guilt, and we retain our new *status* of grace. We are "justified by faith," and by the same faith "we have our access into grace whereby *we stand*" (Rom. v. 1, 2) and "*rejoice*." The grafting into Christ, the abiding in Christ, the joy in Christ,—all hinge upon faith. No Paul, nor any other wise pastor, will venture to "lord" it over the life of faith. "One is Master, even Christ; the rest are all brethren" (Matt. xxiii. 8). (2) But it is brotherly in the highest degree to help the "joy" of another. "To add sunshine to daylight," as Wordsworth says, is no small honour to a successful pastor. To be able so to bring a living, bright, realised Christ near to them, as that fear gives place to rest, and gloom to joy; so to be used to open up Scripture, with its teachings as to the "style" of life possible to, becoming in, provided for, children of God, as that they rise to the higher level, and with a glad and free heart, which has lost everything of merely obligatory and mechanical, all sense of bondage and constraint, in religion, go forward, "glad in the Lord"; by his own testimony and experience, so to be helpful as to clear away difficulties, and to encourage and embolden fearful hearts to hope for more, and to dare more, in the life of godliness;—it may well be an ambition of a worthy pastor, as, when won, it will be a cause of unspeakable thankfulness.

IV. **The pastor exercising discipline.**—1. He does *it in the spirit just sketched out,—not as a lord, but as a helper.* A pure Church is a glad Church. Offences purged away, Achans sought out and put away, then conquests and work proceed apace, and all share the joy of success. If also discipline be exercised upon the individual, it is not for his destruction, or even for his exclusion, but for his recovery from his fall, and his restoration to his place in Christ; and thus is really working towards the joy of even the offender. It might be difficult, without undue straining, to find any analogical suggestion of God or Christ in Paul's disclaimer of "*lordship*" over their faith; though when we remember how sacredly the liberty of the will is guarded in all the relations between God and man, and how that most Godlike characteristic of the human personality is (may we say?) so "respected" by God Himself, that all the loving, mighty constraint used by the Spirit of God, when endeavouring to lead a man to Christ, always stops short of compulsion; and when we remember how, assisted though it be by the grace of God, the act of believing is a man's own, for which he is responsible; we might almost say that God Himself has chosen to refrain from exercising lordship over men's faith. There would be no morality, no value to Him, in a compelled believing, or in a compulsory creed—a thing which, if accepted at all, must be accepted by a hypocrite or a machine. He would not care for the offering of such a faith. So far as there is surrender to His yoke, it is the surrender of a convinced understanding or of an instructed heart. But it needs no forcing of analogy to see God as the supreme "*helper of*" His people's "*joy*," even when exercising the discipline of rebuke and sharp chastening. It is the happy paradox of the Christian life: "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." "We 'exult' in tribulations also, knowing that," etc. (Jas. i. 2; Rom. v. 3). If the foundation of the Christian character be right, if the heart be sound toward God, then all His providential discipline of habit and character, all the keen pruning away of excrescences and blemishes, everything which smites, and delivers from, sin,—all work together for a holiness which is, in part, joy. "The *happy* God" [so literally 1 Tim. i. 11, vi. 15] works towards His own happiness in His children. He loves to have them "rejoice evermore"; it is part of His "will in Christ Jesus concerning

them" (1 Thess. v. 16-18). "That your joy may be full" is a distinct desire and purpose of that Son, Who in all things has revealed to us the Father, by what Himself *is*, quite as much as by what He *says* about the Father (John xvi. 24). Cf. also xvii. 13: "That they might have *My* joy fulfilled in themselves." The pastoral office of the Great Shepherd may not infrequently demand words as sharp, and discipline as severe, as those of Paul the pastor towards his Corinthians; but it aims at their joy. Their religious life can never realise *fully* how the "fruit of the Spirit is . . . joy," if there be, in any degree or form, sin. Yet He would have their life not a restraint, or a series of self-denials, or a round of stern obligations, nor even a hoping and striving forward and upward, without ever being quite satisfied; but, rather, a "joyous" life, full of assurance and buoyancy and victory. Indeed, the "joy" is not only a thing desirable in itself; it is a means to something yet more desirable. "The joy of the Lord is strength" to the Lord's people, as certainly now as in the days of Nehemiah (viii. 10). It is a view of the Heavenly Father as unworthy and untrue as was the Corinthian view of Paul, to imagine Him without care for His people's happiness. He is not the God to grudge "joy" to His creatures. They should not think of Him as, if anything, predisposed to take away rather than to give; as likely to meet their devotion to Him of themselves and of all they are and have, by a demand for the surrender of something very dear. He cares for their holiness first; if that can be secured, and yet even their natural "joy" be untouched or enhanced, He will assuredly so order it, in His disposition of their life. Holiness is before all; but joy through holiness is certain; and He will always work towards this, with a *minimum* of discipline and of pain. Did this passage in the letter so reveal the heart of the real Paul to the Corinthian Church that they doubted, or maligned him, no more? "Do believe it, brethren, that in writing as I did, and in all I have done for you, I desired to be a helper of your joy." If His people will look into the heart of God, as it has been laid bare to them in the words and work, and in the very self, of His Son, they will see in Him also One Who by all His dealings with them heartily desires their joy. And when at last they "enter into the joy of their Lord" (Matt. xxv. 21), the "good and faithful servants" will be realising the fulfilment of all their Divine Master's purposes and leading in their life.

2. *He delays, and is reluctant to exercise discipline at all.* "*To spare you, I came not as yet*," etc.—Here again is a trait of that God in Christ Whom Paul, as it were, reproduces, as a consequence of the union, the unifying, the real fellowship of life, which are his "in Christ." Anybody can drive away or cut off a sheep from the flock (Ezek. xxxiv. 4, etc.; John x. 12). The "Wolf" can do that admirably; it is his work. "*We are not ignorant of his devices.*" If he could have picked up this poor Corinthian thrust out of the fold, nothing would have served his turn better than an excessive discipline, carried beyond what the repentance of the offender now had made necessary. Accordingly, Paul would have the Corinthian Church follow the lead of his own action towards them as a whole. "A *minimum* of discipline, brethren, and that reluctant, and delayed. Take your penitent back again. You have chastened him sufficiently. Your concurrent (ver. 6) censure has had its effect. He is in danger of being swallowed up by the very excess of the sorrow of his repentant shame. You have been yourselves put to the test." [As every case of wrong-doing in a Church does put the members to the test. What is their attitude towards sin? What towards this particular sin? Can it be said by their Lord, "Ye cannot bear them which are evil"? (Rev. ii. 1, of the very Ephesus from which Paul is writing). Is there that sure sign of health in a body, that it is restless, and cannot suffer a wound to heal up, so long as any diseased bone or foreign body lodged in its tissues is unexpelled?] "I wanted [did not their

Lord also desire?] to see whether you felt with me about such sin, and whether, indeed, my word would command your obedience." [Not "*lording it over*" them, indeed, yet "having rule," such rule as a shepherd must needs exercise over a flock (Heb. xiii. 7, 17).] "You have stood the test well. Now we must not play the game of Satan, and leave to him a soul for his prey. Restore the man; confirm your love toward him. As little discipline as possible; as little putting away as possible. That was in my heart towards yourselves, when I changed my route, and did not come direct to you. I did not want to be necessitated to visit sharply sin such as I should have found if I had come then, but which you now have put away." It is wise pastoral policy, it is wise paternal rule in a family, as it is wise political government, to govern as little as possible, to punish as seldom as possible, to aim at recovery and restoration rather than penal infliction or exclusion. It is the wisdom, it is the heart of "a good shepherd;" it is once more the heart of God. Again the analogy needs no forcing, and it is based upon a real unity of purpose and life. As the weeping pastor at Ephesus, so the patient, but often deeply grieved, Father in heaven: "To spare you I came not," etc. Hear Him speaking of old: "I will not be always wroth, for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made" (Isa. lvii. 16). "The longsuffering of God leadeth thee to repentance" (Rom. ii. 4). Remembering the holy intensity of God's necessary antagonism ["hatred"] to sin; remembering the flagrant, and insolent, offence to His holiness which every day goes up to Him from earth; remembering the fearful propagatory power of evil and of the prolonged life of an evil-doer; do not men naturally wonder that the just Judge "*bears so long*," not only with His people, to whom all this sin is an offence, a temptation, a trial, and sometimes an acute and oppressive persecution, but with the evil-doers themselves? (Luke xviii. 7). When men have seen some culminating and outrageous piece of cruelty, or treachery, or fraud committed, have they not *primâ facie* reason to say, as the wrong-doer seems not only to escape penalty, but even to prosper as the fruit of his sin, "Him doth God know? Is there knowledge in the Most High?" [Ps. lxxiii. 11; but note that the question has in that verse a boldly unbelieving turn and tone given to it]. God can afford to wait, and to be silent, however misunderstood and misjudged. ["Patiens, quia æternus" (Augustine).] And His answer to His Church in the day of His own vindication will be: "To spare the sinners, I came not," etc. It is the appeal of His forbearance to the individual sinner. Why was he not cut off, cast off, the very first time he deliberately, and with clear understanding of his act, refused to obey the will or call of God? Why did not a stroke of judgment make his first sin his last—at any rate, his last on earth? "To spare thee, I came not," etc. Judgment must come some day. God's patience is holy, and therefore cannot be infinite. But holy wrath lingers. "The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now," etc. (Acts xvii. 30). How often has Paul's turning aside from a visitation, which could have had no room in it for anything but punishment, been reproduced on a scale of Divine enlargement of love and patience, in His turning aside from the sinner, desiring that respite and delay might mean a repentance which should make judgment needless, and mercy and restoration possible to the Divine Love?

V. **The pastor's absolution.**—Two Gospel passages underlie, or are well illustrated by, vers. 7, 10. 1. In Matt. xviii. 18 a power of "binding" and "loosing" is made one of the prerogatives of the Church of Christ within its own borders. To whom is such a power to sit in judgment upon their fellow-men to be entrusted? To even "two or three," if they be "met in [unto] the name" of their Lord; in which case He also is with them "in the midst," and thus, with Him, two or three—with no restriction to apostles or "official" members—are a

*quorum* which may form an assembly of the Church, valid for discipline whether to bind or loose sentence and penalty. Inherent in the whole body,—for the terms are perfectly general,—it may be from time to time, and from case to case, specially localised in the particular Church, or even in the two or three along with whom is the Fourth, the First, the Lord. [So John xx. 22, 33, spoken, both as to mission and disciplinary power, to a much larger company than "the twelve."] Accordingly "the *many*" at Corinth had "*inflicted the punishment.*" It is "*ye* forgive"; Paul follows the lead, or adopts the act, of the Church. There is no need to suppose that, even at a date so early, there were not elders, or officers of some sort, at Corinth, who in the disciplinary action would be the mouthpiece of the Church. But convenience and seemly order, not principle, would govern and dictate such a specialisation of function. Their forgiveness would be the forgiveness of the whole Church. The Church has acted, without waiting for Paul, or even for his directions to forgive the man. 2. Matt. xvii. 19, 20 is also in his mind. Rather, it is his working theory of discipline in the Church, as was seen in 1 Cor. v. 3-5. The gathering which he there instructed them to arrange for, in regard to this very offender, was to be composed of the Church, *plus* Paul's "spirit," *plus* the power of the presence of "the Lord Jesus Christ." Then their discipline became the discipline of Christ; and now that they have forgiven, Paul concurs and forgives, just as if he had been actually with them. But the forgiveness of the Church, met "in that Name," and the forgiveness of Paul thus exercised to ratify theirs, are neither ecclesiastical nor sacerdotal, but representative; it is, as it were, "*in the person of Christ*" [to keep to the translation which falls in so perfectly with the passage in the Gospels and that in the preceding Epistle]. As in the original enactment of this power of "binding" and "loosing," the act is His Who is "in their midst," answering by His very presence and direction the prayer for guidance, as touching which the little company have "agreed to ask." Christ is the supreme and sole fount of forgiveness. All human forgiveness is declaratory only. The priest who "cleansed" the leper [Ps. li. 2, "cleanse me"; the quasi-technical word for the act of the priest in such a case] could only declare him physically clean, and give official recognition to the fact that *ipso facto* he had become released from all the restrictions binding on a leper. "Loosing" him meant declaring him "loosed." *It is a pastoral absolution;* the forgiveness of a shepherd who cares most that a sheep shall not be thrust into the power of Satan, the master of many "devices," subtle as of old.

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 12—17.

(Nearly all the details of interpretation of vers. 14-16 will be found more fully taken up in the detailed Homiletics which follow.)

I. **"Paul turning away from 'an open door'!"**—1. *A marvel!* This is the man who in his former letter could not leave his work at Ephesus because there was "a great door and effectual" opened to him (1 Cor. xvi. 9). In this very Troad and its neighbourhood he had on a former journey tried many "*doors,*" only to find that they were not "*open*"; closed against him by the "Spirit of Jesus" (Acts xvi. 6-8). Now the door was open, and apparently he did enter and begin his work, and in a brief while with much success; for on the return journey from Corinth he found a little Church in Troas with whom he spent the Sunday (Acts xix. 5-12). Yet he put his work down, left the open door, and in "*restlessness*" of spirit, and in anxiety about Corinth, from which there came no tidings, he crossed over into the Macedonian region to meet Titus, as he hoped, the sooner [as he, in fact, did (vii. 6)].

2. *Such a detail*, with its self-revelation, *has no small value* from the point of view of the historical student. Just such touches as these make it impossible, without a scepticism which puts the sceptic altogether out of court, as not deserving to be listened to, to doubt that we are dealing with a document historically veracious to the last degree, the real letter of a real man, of the date which is professed and claimed; with all the evidential consequences which flow from the genuineness and the contemporary testimony of such a letter from such a competent witness. *Such details are* important *credentials* of a revelation which is nothing if not historic.

3. *But they are parts of the revelation.*—God reveals His mind partly in selected histories and biographies, "stories with a purpose," those points being brought out in the telling which best help the purpose of the Divine Narrator. Plainly, then, the highest type of worker is not above "moods" and almost uncontrollable emotion; such moods and deep emotion as may unsettle him, and even render it impossible for him to continue his work. "The peace of God which is to guard heart and thoughts" (Phil. iv. 7), standing sentry, as it were, at the heart's door and preventing the entrance of distressing or mischievous thought, is no such mechanical defence as to produce mere insensibility. There is in perfect service no such mechanical labour, no such mechanical fulfilment of duty, as might be got from a machine wound up to do a set task, and going rigorously through with it, without interest or without feeling. "But, Paul cannot you trust your work at Corinth in the hands of your Master? After all, is it not more His work than yours? You did your part at Corinth whilst you lived there; you have done your part in this unhappy business about the incestuous man, by writing your letter and by sending Titus. Cannot you now leave the issues, and go quietly on with your work? We know, indeed, that your personal stake in the matter is not small, but we know, too, that your reputation has long ago been put into the hands of your Lord. What the Corinthians will have thought and done, when they got your letter, whether they will obey you, or whether this will have inflamed the factious party into fresh opposition, or even have given them a means of bringing over to their side some who have hitherto been 'of Paul,'—we know how little you regard this for your own sake. Cannot you 'rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him'? and meanwhile work on, within this open door in the Troad?" There is nothing in such thoughts which is not truth, and the high privilege of the life consecrated so entirely to Christ that everything in it, like the man himself, is Christ's, not his own. No life was ever more utterly removed from all self-centering thought or work or care than was Paul's: "to him to live was '**Christ**.'" Yet we love him none the worse, nor is he the less valuable a detail of God's revealed will on such matters, that his very example here checks all unhealthy and exaggerated application of such truths as were just now suggested. There is not the rigid support of, and compliance with, a relentless code which takes no account of human nature. In the illustrative and didactic instance which Paul supplies there is the perfect naturalness and elasticity of simple, real life. No man more certainly than he would subordinate all personal considerations to the interests of the work of Christ. But neither did His Lord expect him not to feel, to feel acutely, to feel with a depth of emotion which was a real disqualification for going on with his work in Troas. We serve a profoundly reasonable Master, Who knows exactly how much to expect from His servants, of submission in days of sorrow, of acquiescence in days of disappointment, of peace and rest as well as trust in days when, naturally, circumstances would keep brain and heart in a whirl of anxiety, or strained to their utmost tension. After all, the work of Christ at Corinth was the main thing at stake. To this, even in Paul's mind, everything else stood second. We love Paul none the less, nor did his Lord, we may

well believe, condemn him, that his distress turned him away from "*an open door.*"

II. **Paul in the train of Christ's triumph.**—1. Such details as we have been studying are part of God's Revelation, taken up into it, made the vehicle of a distinct addition to our knowledge of the mind of God, and of His will on such questions of the practical conduct of Christian men. So, similarly, *such changes of plan*, hingeing on such trivial occasions, *are all parts of the progress of the Gospel.* They are all contributory to the great plan of campaign, according to which Christ is subduing the world to Himself. They all fall in with the movement of His march to ultimate victory over "things in earth" (Phil. ii. 10). They are small details of a great progress whose goal is the day when it shall be proclaimed that "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of God's Christ" (Rev. xi. 5). It is a progress which seems often retarded. The ground occupied in this very Asia and Troas and Macedonia, is hardly retained for Him to-day. It is often difficult for faith to see any movement at all; more difficult to see any plan at all. The faith which does see the plan, and hold fast to its hope in the triumph, is a grace, the gift of the "Spirit of faith." It is one subordinate manifestation of the supreme faith, which that Spirit also alone gives, that "Jesus is the Lord" (1 Cor. xii. 3). If that truth be grasped, all else is held. "We see not yet all things put under Him. Though the name of Christ rises ever more loudly above the tumult, the day of victory seems far off. But by the Holy Ghost we know that 'nothing which ought not to be need be.' We look back and see *forms* of evil dead—it may be dead for ever. Evil itself lives, and may even seem after some triumph of good to close in more pitilessly than before, but to those who take the large outlook it is clear that progress is being made. To say that the fight is hopeless is to deny the Lordship of Christ. . . . There is danger unfathomable and unending in admitting that any wrong is inevitable, that anything is too hard for the Lord" (Editorial, *British Weekly*, October 26th, 1893). Every conversion has this significance and this importance to the history of the very world itself, that one more life which lay athwart, or ran counter to, the line of the movement of the will of God, and the progress of King Jesus to His final and universal victory, is brought into parallelism, and moves with the Divine movement. And then, all the details of that life, all its activities and aims, in proportion as they are pervaded with the spirit of consecrated service and are made a perpetually renewed offering to Christ, for His service and glory, become details in the triumph of the Great Conqueror. In the old phrase, all such turnings away from Troas and crossings over into Macedonia, are "overruled" for the advantage of the work of God. At the least, *the "knowledge of Christ* and its *savour"* are thus "*made manifest*" in a greater number of cities and centres. No man is on that account to indulge "moods" and "feelings"; to pick up this work, or lay down the other, according as he may, or may not, "feel in the spirit of it"; to enter one door "because he is happy in the work" there, and turn aside from another, or quit it, when he has entered it, because "he was not happy." But Paul's quick faith triumphs over the record and the memory of his keen distress at Troas. "It is all right! Thank God! The triumph moves on nevertheless. And we with it! Glory be to God!"

2. *The triumph sweeps everybody into its course.*—There are no mere spectators. Paul was an enemy once. He is a trophy of the Great Imperator now. He is indeed (by a quick transformation) a soldier sharing, in some humble part, the triumph. It is Christ's triumph, indeed. The Lord is the Centre of the spectacle. But every subaltern and private is the object of somebody's regard; to them, *he* is triumphing. To himself, at any rate, he is triumphant. Nobody who comes into contact with Christ remains indifferent. Triumphed over, and that only, and dragged onward "*to death*"; or triumphed over, and led onward,

triumphing also, "*to life.*" If Christ's triumph "comes our way," we must, in one way or another, "fall in." To Paul himself the "*savour*," so far as he knew of it, was once "*of death, unto death*"; now "*the savour*" of his living Lord—not lying dead or corrupting in Joseph's new tomb—was "*of life*," as, himself "saved by the Lord's life" (Rom. v. 10) and diffusing a Gospel "*of life*" wherever he went, he moved onward "*to life*," "to lay hold of the life which is **Life** indeed" (1 Tim. vi. 19).

III. **Paul a genuine man dispensing a genuine Gospel.**—1. Other men might, and did, use an incense whose "*savour*" was not simply and only "*of Christ.*" There was in most cases much of Christ in it, or at least something. [Even the men at Rome who were preaching with "by-motives, not sincerely," and indeed in a spirit "of contention," were at least so "preaching Christ" that Paul rejoiced at their work, though only with a modified joy and satisfaction (Phil. i. 18).] Whilst they bade men "Come buy and eat" (Isa. lv. 1), there was adulteration in their bread, there was admixture in their wine. [The "milk" was not "the sincere milk of the Word" (1 Pet. ii. 2).] Like dishonest hucksters, for their own gain, or at best for some personal satisfaction, they dealt in a "*Word of God*" which was not "*incorrupt*" [Tit. ii. 7; but quite another word and figure from that of the text here]. Jewish admixture everywhere; half-heathen, childish superstition in Colosse; rationalising treatment of fundamental truths at Corinth; "*many*" dealt deceitfully with the Word they preached. [See Homiletics on "Charity," 1 Cor. xiii. 5, "thinketh no evil."] By-motives in the preaching, even if the truth preached were tolerably pure. "*Many!*" What a view of "Primitive Christianity"! [Shall the figure be pushed so far as to suggest that some diffusers of the incense try so to compound it that it shall not be a "*savour of death*," even to the "natural" man? Try so to flavour the wine that the "natural" palate likes it, or at least makes no great objection to it?]

2. *Not so Paul.*—He returns to the protest he made in i. 12, that his whole character and conduct had been at the uttermost remove from any of the self-seeking, the vacillation, or tricky change of purpose with which he was charged at Corinth. But he lifts the whole matter of his personal vindication up to a higher level here than there. Then he protested his "sincerity" as between himself and them; here he protests it in respect of his dealing with "the Word." Yet even on that lower level it was a "*sincerity of God*," which he here also claims; his phrases here analysing that of the earlier verse. He speaks in God's hearing, conscious of a Listener before Whom he stands, seen through and through, heard through and through. No falsehood of heart but will ring in the voice, to that Ear! No unsoundness, no evil admixture, in his teaching can escape the scrutiny of that Eye. The Great Analyst knows that he does not deal falsely with the Gospel, the "Word of God" put into his mouth to speak. He can "call God to witness upon his soul," he said (i. 23). He can lay bare his inmost heart and thought, and challenge that scrutiny. He may well do so, for his "sincerity" is a grace, a gift "*of God*" by His Spirit. Happy that teacher of Divine truth who is sustained under calumny, or in the midst of misunderstanding, by such a confidence! "The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, he knoweth, and Israel he shall know" (Josh. xxii. 22). Happy if he never be betrayed into conduct in his office, if never a word come from his lips, concerning which he needs to falter as he faces his own conscience, and concerning which also, as far as man may, he may not look up into the face of God, and claim even His witness that he has not knowingly dealt falsely with his trust, "the Word" which has been given to him to administer. What a check upon everything but supreme loyalty to God's Truth! What a defence against temptation to man-pleasing! And against self-pleasing! And against any dishonest retailing

of old formulas which, rightly or wrongly, no longer represent a man's beliefs! Honesty, honesty, before all things honesty, in the man who deals with the honest, genuine "Word of God"! Is any most unprincipled, adulterating tradesman so base as the man who adulterates the Bread by which men live, the "Word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God"? Let the world have at least that as genuine as the apostle, the prophet, the teacher, can give it. This sincere man deals out a genuine Gospel.

## SEPARATE HOMILIES.

Vers. 14-16. *The triumph; the Captives; the Incense.*—[Probably, if not certainly, imagery derived from a Roman triumph.] One of the grandest spectacles of ancient world. All Rome kept holiday; everybody in the streets. Sometimes the show for three whole days winding its way along up to the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol. All ranks and ages watching the long procession hour after hour, with unflagging interest. The Victorious Army, with the spoil heaped up upon long trains of waggons; piles of gold and silver coin; magnificent dresses and ornaments; statues and pictures, such as Memmius had carried off from plundered Corinth; arms and armour from the battle-field. Then the Captives; of strange garb and look and speech. Then the Conqueror, the man of the Day. Not seldom, in golden fetters, bound to, and walking behind, his chariot, the unhappy general, or king, or queen of the conquered foes; often overwhelmed with ridicule, reproach, abuse, by the merciless, civilised brutality of the spectators. The procession moved along amidst clouds of Incense; many in the procession swung censers; burning braziers of charcoal fed with it along the line of route; a fragrance grateful to all! *No, not to all.* To some of those captives the fate appointed at the end of the day is Death. To the public eye the end of the spectacle will be the conqueror's sacrifice in the temple of Jupiter. To the victorious troops, dismissal with rewards, each to become a hero in his little home circle. To the mass of captives, slavery, but life. To the condemned ones, death in the rock-hewn dungeons close by the Capitoline Hill. To these the "grateful" incense smells foul as the breath of a charnel-house. To all besides, "*a sweet savour*," a "savour of life," as they move on towards, at least life, if not liberty. To these "*a savour of death*," as they move onwards "*unto death.*" [Most of these points are used in the passage; with some confusion of metaphor, or rather an intentional change in the use of the illustration, characteristic of Paul.]

I. **What a Christian's life is to himself.**—1. He is *being led*, by God, *from place to place, in the triumphal procession* of Christ. Paul is writing from Macedonia. At Troas, just before, he had found "*an open door*," but had, strangely, turned away from it and had crossed over into Europe. Such a sudden change and movement was a sample of his life. "*Found no rest for his spirit*" in Troas; found no rest for his body anywhere! His life was an incessant movement. Antioch one day; Ephesus almost the next; Ephesus to Corinth; Corinth to Jerusalem; Jerusalem to Rome—the other end of the world of that day! Traversing the Roman Empire in journeys which were rather flights than journeys. To us it seems a wearing, restless, anxious life. To him God's hand was in all such changes. Even a trivial change like this in question is part of God's will and plan for Paul's life. He accepted all such incessant change with acquiescence; indeed, with thankfulness and rejoicing. "*Thanks be to God*" who is thus leading him about from place to place in the train of the triumph of Jesus Christ! He only waits to know where God

would have him go next. He follows gladly, since he follows Christ! 2. So for every Christian man. In every change of station, of circumstances, of abode, he should seek and follow the leading of God. Then even the most perplexing, harassing diversion from his own plans will be no matter of chafing discontent and fretful irritation, but of glorying acquiescence in the plan of God. 3. *How grand this makes even the humblest life!* The procession, the train of Christ's triumph, is moving onward with majestic march, swelling in numbers as it advances. He is sweeping onward in triumph; the humblest of His people is moving on in triumph with Him—onward to the consummate day of His triumph. 4. *From place to place he is being exhibited as one of Christ's trophies.* Grammatically, it may be either, "Maketh us to triumph," or "Triumpheth over us." Both are true. He is *shown* in the triumph; he *shares* in the triumph. The army and the captives are here one and the same company. Christ has been God's General, sent to reduce rebellious earth to submission. Began the war single-handed. Every slain enemy becomes a living helper and a soldier. Other conquerors begin with an army, and lessen or lose it as the war proceeds. Our Captain began without an army, and wins and makes one as the war goes on. Has no victorious army but of conquered captives. Every enemy who submits, falls into the ranks of those who obey His command. The marvel of the mercy of the Gospel this. Every soldier has been an enemy. Rebels not only forgiven and allowed to live, but enlisted, and richly rewarded for service. Those over whom Christ triumphs, triumph with Him in His march to heaven. By-and-by, when He enters in glory through the "everlasting doors" the "King of Glory," they shall appear with Him in, and with Him enter into, glory. 5. *The victory of a Christian is the victory of one first vanquished.* A soul's victory begins in Christ's victory over it. "Thanks to God who triumphs over us in Christ, for in Christ He makes us to triumph with Christ too!"

II. **What a Christian's life is to God.**—1. A grand exhibition of His conquering power, but also of His gracious heart in Christ towards all who submit. His method of advertising, of diffusing "*in every place, the knowledge of Christ.*" Paul a consummate example of this principle. Did his worst in rebellion against God's Christ. A pre-eminent persecutor; a zealot of the zealots. Then what a change! Preaches the faith he once destroyed; preaches it, as he persecuted it, "unto strange cities" (Acts xxvi. 11). Paul was in himself a *fact* which was a consummate testimony for Christ. In himself he was text and preacher and sermon. ["A pattern," 1 Tim. i. 15, 16.] To see Paul was to see what Christ could do. Not only his preaching, but his exhibition in this place and that, a captive chained to the chariot of Christ, was diffusing "*the knowledge of Christ in every place.*" If God be pleased so to use him, so to lead him hither and thither, he acquiesces, he glories. [Same turn of thought in 2 Cor. x. 5. Read Paul, and see how this Rabbi's whole system of thought—doctrinal, exegetical, ethical—wears the bonds of Christ. "*Every thought led captive.*" See Homilies, *in loco.*] 2. A work for God within the reach of all. Let Christ conquer; put His yoke upon natural pride, anger—"natural" *everything*; subdue, in business, home, all; then let God exhibit the man, parade him up and down the world, an example of His conquering power, His matchless grace. The great business of life. After some great change in life, involving a new home, perhaps, a new surrounding, a new beginning in everything; thrust, perhaps into an unintended, unexpected, unwelcome destination; after the earliest, inevitable, adjustment to the new conditions in which life to be spent, livelihood to be won, then ask: "Why am I put here? I have been led here in the train of Christ's triumph, to diffuse

here the knowledge of Christ." A purpose that, to which every other stands second. "*To be a savour.*" Anybody can swing, can be, a censer! Men see the smoke of the incense. Cannot see the "*savour.*" Invisible, impalpable, *unmistakable*! So, how fine to meet these about whose every act, word, movement, hangs something defying analysis, impalpable, intangible, *unmistakable*, and **all Christ**! Nothing so much appeals to a non-Christian. [A "*sweet* savour." Would that it were always sweet! Religion real, obvious, respected, in some Christians, but not "*sweet.*"] "*Of Christ;*" this important. Many lives, lovely, beloved, giving out a sweet savour. What is wanting? The trained "scent" of the spiritual man misses something from the incense! *Christ* wanting!

III. **What a Christian's life is to others.**—1. Everybody will not like the incense even when its savour is loveliest, perfect. To the captives it made all the difference whether it were the accompaniment of the march "*to life,*" or the march "*to death.*" 2. Note the sharp division of mankind into "*those that are being saved*"; and "*those that are* [now] *perishing.*" Here a ready test is provided. When a man comes across the "*savour*" of the incense, does he like it—or not? To "*those who are perishing*" the Gospel is loathsome as death. Is full of "*death.*" A dead ("crucified") Christ; "dead in sins"; "dead to sin"; "dead with Christ." A "*savour of death*" seemed to such to hang about all Paul's preaching. 3. More than that, the Christian man and his testimony *help* "*to life,*" or help "*to death.*" No man can be neutral in the presence of Christ, or of the Gospel, or of a true Christian. Better—or worse—for knowing even one such. [Like his Lord, every Christian man is "come for judgment" (John ix. 39). *I.e.* inevitably forces every man with whom associated, to take up an attitude, for or against, God and Christ; is inevitably a present test of character; necessarily ranges men as either "*unto life*" or "*unto death.*"] Well may Paul add, "*Who is sufficient?*" The issues, the responsibility, of a life full of the savour of Christ are terrible! How much more of one where the testimony is marred by inconsistency, the "*savour*" mingled with what is not "*of Christ*"!

Ver. 16. "*Who is sufficient?*"

I. **The minister of the Gospel speaks in these words, as they stand in the Epistle. But they leap to the lips, they are the sigh of the deepest heart, of many another besides a minister.**—There are responsibilities for all. There is no worthy life which has none. The self-sufficient heart that never feels them any burden, that in mere shallow light-heartedness, or slight-heartedness, feels itself at a moment's notice "equal to anything," that with the mechanical imperturbability of a Nasmyth steam-hammer is as ready without a misgiving "to forge an anchor as to crack a nut," has no sense of the meaning of "Life." The sense of insufficiency with which worthier souls must often go forward to meet and assume responsibilities, is one of the keenest and most daunting pains; none causes more exquisite suffering to a soul filled with a tender conscientiousness. Yet no worthy Man would purchase exemption, at the price of less sensitiveness or a duller conscience. *But it makes, not dying but, living the awfully solemn thing.* It is easier to die once, and "to die well" and to have done with it, than to live, "once" indeed also, but a "once" which is extended over twenty, forty, eighty years, at every point of which may be danger of failure, at every point responsibility, new burdens gathering as we go, old ones persistently pressing upon our heart, till life is often one long-drawn strain upon the brain and heart, themselves already tense with the sense of responsibility and of inadequacy. The solemnity of life is not that with untarrying pace it is leading to death—death which crowns all with a swift and irreversible "judgment"; nor that it is doing so much to deter-

mine what that death and its issues shall be. In the true view of life, it is a continuous thing, beginning here, but stretching on unbroken through the veil of "death," into the unseen aud eternal. It is a continuous existence, in which dying is a momentary, and not the most important, incident, one of which the most that can be said is that it introduces to, and marks the commencement of, a new section of the new life—"new" because transacted in new conditions and surroundings. To a Christian man dying has been almost emptied of meaning, as well as of dread. It is not only that the "sting" is gone; the thing itself is practically "abolished" (2 Tim. i. 10). The eternal life has begun, but its real solemnity arises from the responsibilities of living, responsibilities before men and towards God. There are those, *e.g.*,

II. **Of the individual.** — 1. *Nous mourrons seuls.* One might say with equal truth, "We live alone." "Thou art the man," is the word of God, in all rebuke of sin, in all calls to duty, in all believing unto salvation, in the day of Christ's judgment of men. God's claims, our duties—with them each man has singly to do; for them each one of us must "give account of himself to God" (Rom. xiv. 12). As in creation no two atoms really touch each other, so souls are essentially apart. There are collective duties for which there is a collective responsibility, of co-extensive area of incidence. But even then a personal responsibility accrues for the assuming of one's own share in the collective work and obligation. In the end, everything comes back to the individual. "When I remember, in view of this, with what unmeasured powers our Creator has endowed us, and that I am not only responsible for what is done by them, but for what they might do if I rightly used them; when I remember that God has an unquestionable right to all my activities, all my thoughts, all my love; and when withal I am conscious of Sin and Satan so often engrossing and mastering me, that I am daily 'robbing God' (Mal. iii. 8) upon His own earth, under His very eye,—in a word, when I think of all that I ought to do, and all that I ought to be, as contrasted with what I really am, I feel that, in the face of every fact concerning my responsibility as an individual merely, I may well exclaim with trembling, 'Who is sufficient for these things?'" Then there are responsibilities arising from—

2. *His relationships.*—"By connection with our fellow-men none of our old obligations to God are abrogated. There is not one code of morals for the man and another for the merchant, not one law for the individual and another for the statesman, warrior, king. All God's claims are binding on us always—wrong is wrong, right is right, everywhere. By entering on new relationships we can never free ourselves from the moral laws that are authoritative upon us as individuals; on the contrary, new relationships create new responsibilities. *Who can measure the responsibilities of a parent?* To the father and mother of that infant are committed most of its preparation for the stern and deadly struggle with sin, which is to decide its eternal destiny. The privilege of training a child for a beautiful and true life here, and for a yet more beautiful and true life hereafter, is the most surpassingly glorious a parent's heart can desire; the responsibility of having by lip or life ruined a child here, leaving it to wander, lost, homeless, for ever, will be the most crushing a parent's heart can bear." No father or mother who remembers how pliable and how delicate a thing is the young character, but will cry out, "Who is sufficient?" A single slip of the seal engraver's tool, or too deep a cutting, may mar the labour of months. Parents are cutting an image in a most precious gem. A weight or a bond too many may give a warp to the young branch, which shall never be straightened out all life through. A wrong word or a wrong act may make its indelible mark upon the fearfully "spoilable" material, and

yet so valuable, entrusted to us to work upon. And who can measure *the responsibilities of a preacher*? Men talk lightly of the preacher's life, as if he had "light work, good position, good pay"! There is honour, truly. Every man worthy to be in the ranks of the ministry, understands the privilege of being the confidant and comforter of souls, and their helper in sorrow. It is no mean honour to be in an office where he may speak words welcome to weary hearts as water to the thirsty traveller in an Arabian desert, or words which may send on the hearer into the week of worry and toil with new energy and hope. To send away singing some heart that came sad; to say words which in another heart shall ring on many following days like a trumpet-call to duty; or which in a moment of danger shall recur to another, perhaps to a young man in his hour of temptation, like the gentle voice of a warning friend; to be permited to speak words which shall for many a day feed men and women as with supernatural strength, or which may even awaken some soul that is slumbering on, heedless of its high destiny and its awful progress toward eternity, marking the turning-point of a life,—all this is an honour angels might covet; the dignity of being God's ambassador yields to none other. But the responsibility of it! If the congregation come and go and no soul be cheered, or fed, or warned; if no lesson be taught, and no impetus given to the good in any life; what then? The man's "service" is a failure, if no heart is lifted to God, if the sheep turn away hungry still; if the children gather round their elder brother, and he give them the stone of mere lecturing, or the husks of mere brilliance. There is a partial failure if the hearer be only instructed, and not persuaded. The heart may be moved, the intellect satisfied; but, if the will be not moved? "*Who is sufficient?*" Men understand what it is in business to pay high salaries for trustworthiness and responsibility. Money, life, depend upon one man's skill and judgment and fidelity, and men pay accordingly. But for how much "pay" will a man intelligently undertake to "watch for souls as one that must give account"? Stand at the great "Day" by a preacher confronted with a man once in his congregation who says, and truly, "I came hungry, or perplexed, or indifferent,—or under deep conviction of sin, and you had no word for me. I passed on; my disappointed heart made me sceptical. I doubted God, or hated Him." Another, "I passed on, hardening under your powerless word, and now am lost." Another, "I, too, passed on, and my convictions died away." Certainly the responsibility of the loss of a soul never lies *entirely* at a preacher's door. Every man knows that, at the very heart of the matter, the responsibility is his own, however others may have contributed to the conditions of his life. But if in that Day that minister says: "Ah! that was the day when I had made 'scamped,' hasty preparation; when in mere spiritual indolence my closet devotion had been slurred over, when my own tone was low, and I went into the pulpit powerless. It was *my* opportunity with that man; I was not that day the man to seize it. I am saved here; but he——" As those that must give account of the sermons of a year, of a ministry; and of that incessant ministry of pastoral and personal character. For how much "pay" will a man undertake this? Then, further, are to be added the considerations here specially pressing upon Paul. *On the most faithful ministry* of the most spiritual man *hangs* not only life, but *death*. Some hearers he will certainly not save; as certainly will their heart pervert his ministry into the occasion of "*death*." "For *judgment* Christ came into the world," etc. (John ix. 39). "For judgment" is every man come into the world. Every man is a test of character, swift, decisive, inevitable, to every other man with whom he comes into contact. Goodness will reveal

and help goodness; but it may awaken and irritate into hatred the evil which it finds. And the minister is a test, and his word is a test, to men and women. The more faithful he is to the ideal and the responsibility of his office, the more surely is he set for "judgment" amongst his fellows. Life and death hang upon mere individual living; *who dares live?* Life and death depend on parental wisdom and love; *who dares train a child?* Life and death hang upon the ministry of the Gospel; *who dares speak in the name of Christ?* "*Who is sufficient?*" "Brethren, pray for us!"—*Slightly suggested by "Homilist," New Series*, iv. 385.

Ver. 16. "*Who is sufficient?*"

I. **These words express a sense of the greatness of the work undertaken.**—The ministry is a work

1. *Great in its nature.*—There is *the exposition of the Bible.* In His word He has given us the highest teaching, the divinest doctrine. He has taught us concerning our own past, and the world's past, our own and the world's future. Above all, He has given light on our relationship to Himself;—ourselves, Himself, and the Mediator between us. Hence there is here the greatest truth that can possess man's mind, truth that the angels desire to look into, and which take us an eternity to understand; truth, too, whose distinguishing glory it is to be remedial in its nature, restorative in its aim. Every man is bound to be a student of the Holy Book and a learner for himself at the feet of the Great Teacher; the minister pre-eminently should acquaint himself with its truths, and aid those around him to understand them and feel their power. And all this statement and enforcing of truth must be in Paul's spirit,—Christ's. When the study of the preacher is unfaithful, unfilial, and his preaching unloving, unsympathetic, unchristian; when there is medley doctrine, or a forced, unnatural earnestness in its promulgation, the pulpit is weak. Not only does Christ claim that His spirit shall be present in the work of His servants; the very world of "society" demands it, and triumphs if it be absent, or lost. To misrepresent the truth of God, the life of Christ; to be erroneous in teaching and inconsistent in character,—the possibility makes a man cry: "Who is sufficient?"

2. *Great in its influence.*—To influence and mould deathless souls! To have to do with the understanding, heart, will, of man, with all their outworkings now and for ever! "The preaching is to bless or curse all who listen. It is to save those who receive it, from sin, self, hell; to save them by means of the truth, through the love of Christ, by the Spirit of God. It is to unshackle every undying power of the enslaved soul. It is to heal the diseased, to raise the dead. But those whom it will not bless it will curse; it will harden them in sin. It will add to their privileges and responsibilities new ones which will utter for ever a condemning cry against them. This continual, inevitable, twofold effect make the work awfully responsible, momentously great."

II. **The insufficiency of man to perform the work.**—1. How inadequate is man to expound the Scripture. "Easy work to preach the Gospel; it is so simple!" So they say; but is it? If an intelligent, harmonious representation of truth be given, there is material for the highest thought, scope for every faculty. Every power is challenged to the work, for also, in a true sense, man's reason must be satisfied; the truth must be so presented as to do homage to the Book and persuade the man. 2. Is it "easy," again, for feeble man to cherish the *spirit* essential to the work, a living sympathy with all that is holy and true, and a righteous hatred to all that is corrupt and false, unswerving loyalty to the claims of God, unchangeable love to the souls of men? It is impossible to interpret the Book without a spirit too real for pietism, too earnest for fearfulness, too holy for dalliance with sin; is it easy to retain such a spirit?

3. Who has ever taught even a Sabbath scholar, and, much more, who has tried to win an adult for Christ by direct, personal effort, but has learned this lesson, most quickly and most surely of all—the pitiable powerlessness of human strength to dislodge Satan from the hearts which we would bless? To attempt to guide the judgment or move the will of some wayward youth, or hardened profligate, or utter, though "blameless," worldling,—it is a child's attack upon a garrisoned fortress. It is hard to bless; and if the word do not bless "*unto life*," it must hurt "*unto death*." "**Who is sufficient?**"

III. **The qualification for the work.**—The great, primary qualification is *this very spirit of conscious inefficiency*. "When I am weak, then am I strong." The old heathen believed that their heroes were strengthened to dare and to do, by becoming possessed of the skill and might of the gods of their special devotion. Their dream may be our reality. Only with them the gods favoured the cunning, the vaunting, the strong; our God "increaseth strength"—for work, as well as for journeying or endurance—"to them that have no might" (Isa. xl. 29). Depressing want of apparent success may often be needed to crush out egoism, self-sufficiency, pride, until in helplessness the man is at last flung upon God and His might. When men "have toiled all night and have caught nothing," then are they ready to be helped and guided by their Master to a "catch" whose success is His, not theirs. To succeed, men must work and teach and live in this spirit of conscious insufficiency. "*That no flesh should glory in His presence!*"—*Founded on homily by U. R. Thomas, "Homilist," New Series*, ii. 387 *sqq*.

## *HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.*

Vers. 15, 16. *Manward and Godward Aspects of the Gospel Ministry.*

I. **Manward.**—It may have a vivifying effect. It may have a deadly influence. Because of three unalterable principles: 1. The greater the mercy abused the greater the condemnation. 2. The susceptibility to good impressions decreases in proportion to the resistance against them. 3. Man's moral suffering will be increased in proportion to his consciousness that he once had the means of being happy. ["Woe unto thee, Chorazin," etc.]

II. **Godward.**—A true ministry is unto God "a sweet savour," whatever be its effects upon humanity. [Query is this the meaning of "*unto God*"? and not rather, "*for God's purposes* (and glory)?"] It is in itself, therefore, for good, for good exclusively. It may be the *occasion* of evil, but it is the cause of good. [Cf. a similar, though not parallel, thought in Rom. vii. 10.] Therefore, 1. It saves by design; it destroys, if at all, in spite of its design. 2. It saves by its inherent tendency; it injures, if at all, in spite of that tendency. 3. It saves by Divine agency; it destroys, if at all, in spite of that agency. ["Ye do resist the Holy Ghost."]—*Extracted with modifications from "Homilist," New Series*, ii. 468.

Ver. 17. *The Word is Corrupted.*

I. By introducing error, human philosophy, private opinions, irrelevant matter, by the omission or misrepresentation of important truths, selfish aims.

II. How it ought to be preached—faithfully, sincerely, humbly, earnestly. —[*J. L.*]

[Or start by inquiring what in common life is "*adulteration*," and what are the *motives* of it.]

## CHAPTER III.

### *CRITICAL NOTES.*

N.B. A *continuous outpour* of argument and appeal, all "alive," and quivering, thrilling, with quick emotion, *from* ii. 17 *to* vi. 10.

Ver. 1.—*Q.d.* "There, he is at it again! [ii. 17, or perhaps cf. 1 Cor. ix. 1-6, 15, 21; or something he had said at Corinth, known to his readers]. Praising *himself*!" [Familiarly, "Blowing his own trumpet, since no one else will do it for him."] "*Am I?*" (*q.d.* in ii. 17). **Letters of commendation.**—Such as Apollos brought to Corinth (Acts xviii. 27); or such as this very letter became to Titus (viii. 17-19). Rom. xvi. 1 is a good example; for Phœbe. These Christians travelling from Church to Church appear in 2 John 10, 11, 3 John 5-9 ["*I wrote* unto the Church"]. Seen also in the *Didache*, xii., xiii. Perhaps such as came "from James" to Antioch (Gal. ii. 12) carried such "letters." These became a very common institution in the early Church. N.B., Paul himself had once asked the "authority and commission" of such letters to the synagogue of Damascus (Acts xxvi. 12). Note *the shorter reading.*

Ver. 2.—"Certainly, '**to** *you*' *we* need none. We, who know what place you occupy '*in our hearts*,' know that we do not; you—'*all*' *of you—can* '*read*' our love to you, and you '*know*' that we do not." **In our hearts.**—Others carry theirs in their hands.

Ver. 3.—*New turn* given here *to the figure.* The Corinthians are a letter of commendation for him, not to themselves only, but to other Churches and the world. The Christians at Corinth are a credential for him so conspicuous that it is "*known and read of all men.*" Notice the adroit, courteous, *ad homines* argument. In 1 Cor. xv. he urges that they cannot deny Christ's resurrection without abandoning all hope of their own, and all reality in their salvation from sin. So here, they cannot deny his apostleship without also denying the work of the Spirit of God in their own heart. **Ministered.**—"*Carried about*," as his rivals did their letters. **An epistle of Christ.**—*I.e. written by*, and *given* to His servant Paul *by, Christ Himself.* The argument is that of 1 Cor. ix. 2, 3. In the phraseology, rather than in the thought, are reminiscences of such Old Testament passages as Prov. iii. 3, vii. 3; Ezek. xi. 19, xxxvi. 26. So also the application of the metaphor, like the use of the original figure of "letters of commendation," is modified almost from sentence to sentence. Thus a letter written with "*ink*" passes over into the "*tables of stone*" at Sinai (Jer. xxxi. 33). **Flesh . . . stone.**—Plainly *not* here in any *moral* sense: "*fleshen*" [analogous to "*wooden*"] would exactly represent the thought. **By the Spirit.**—Note the capital letter rightly in the R.V.; His work, the "new creation" of v. 17, the experiences of their new life,—these are the writing of the "*Living God.*" Note the name, "**Living** *God*," in vi. 16; was Paul in Ephesus, as once he had been in Athens, "stirred . . . when he saw the city full of idols"? [Another impressively used Old Testament name in vi. 18, "*the Lord God Almighty.*"]

Ver. 4.—See Appended Note from Stanley. **Such confidence, etc.**—A real answer to the cry of ii. 16, "Who is sufficient?" etc. The word "*sufficient*" and its cognates is here resumed in vers. 5, 6. [Say, "adequate to, competent to, up to the level (measure) of."] He looks "*toward God*," the source of his commission, the giver of adequate grace to fulfil it, the giver of his success at Corinth or elsewhere; he expects all from God, the source, "*through Christ*," the channel.

Ver. 5. **To think . . . of ourselves.**—Misleading to our modern English ears; clearer in R.V. *Q.d.* "to give ourselves any such confident encouragement, drawing our confidence of sufficiency *from* any presumed resources within *ourselves.*"

Ver. 6.—"Proof that this competency comes from God. God gave him *a further and a greater competency*, which involves the less. God made him competent (i. 22) to be a minister of a dispensation, which from its very nature must produce, when it took effect, exactly such a result as he counts the Corinthian Church to be" (Waite, in *Speaker*). **Ministers.**—Reverts to the word of ver. 3; but the personal purpose of that "*ministration*" is gone from his thought; he is "carrying about and dispensing"—"administering"—something far greater and of more importance than any personal credentials, even of the best. **A New Covenant**—N.B. this in R.V., correctly. To be studied with Matt. xxvi. 28 [and this with Exod. xxiv. 8]; Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. [This last in Heb. x. is the pivot around which turns an exposition of the "first" and the "second" (ver. 9), and in Heb. viii. clenches the discussion as between the "new" and the "old"; both of which comparisons should themselves be compared with this of "*letter*" and "*spirit*," which is also found in Rom. ii. 27-29, vii. 6.] **The letter.**—The Law of Moses, graven in so many letters and words on the tables of stone. [The Decalogue is, then, practically "*the* Law," throwing light on Paul's

frequent discussions of "the law," as affecting Christian thought and life.] **The Spirit.**—*Capital S;* the Holy Ghost, Who is the characteristic and crowning glory of the Gospel order. In the argument of Gal. iii. 2, v. 5, "*the Spirit*" is the summary gift of that whole continuous "covenant" of which believers, pre- and post-Pentecostal both, are Abraham's heirs. **Killeth.**—He explains how, in Rom. iii. 19, v. 20, and, particularly, vii. 9-24. [See especially vers. 9, 11, 24, and viii. 2,] of which this verse—this word—is a summary. **Giveth life.**—John vi. 63, 1 Cor. xv. 45 (very interesting), Gal. vi. 8, cast light on this; as does Rom. viii. 11, where the action of the life-giving Holy Ghost is carried further.

Ver. 7. **Of death.**—Though this was not its purpose (Rom. vii. 10), but its incidental result. Keep "*written*" distinct from "*graven on stones*"; *not* "written on stones." "*Written*" is opposed to "*glorious*"; lit. "in letters," "in glory," respectively. *From this point* the chapter is framed on the lines of the narrative of Exod. xxxiv. 28-35; many words and terms of expression being borrowed from the LXX.

Ver. 8. **Glorious.**—"*With* glory," slightly changed from ver. 7. **Shall be.**—Beet carries this forward into a future revelation of a glory for believers analogous to that which clothed Moses' face. But is the "glory" in the second case anything but spiritual, and *analogous* to that in the first? "*Shall be*" occupies the (mental) point of time just before the advent of the "*glorified*" order which was just then becoming actual.

Ver. 9.—Moses was a *dispenser, administrator,* of "*condemnation,*" in that he brought a Law to men which in issue, if not purpose, condemned them.

Ver. 10.—The phraseology here is full of reminiscences of the LXX. **In this respect.**—Stanley: "In this instance of Moses": "In this particular instance was fulfilled the general rule, that a greater glory throws a lesser glory into the shade." Beet: "*In this matter;* in the comparison of the two Covenants." Waite: "*In this particular* of comparative or relative glory." Conybeare [and Howson]: "Literally, *For that which has been glorified in this particular, has not been glorified, because of the glory which surpasses it.*" "The moon is as bright after sunrise as before, but, practically, its brightness is set aside by that of the sun" (Beet).

Ver. 11. **Is done away.**—"Is *being done* away," now, historically, in that Pauline age. Prepositions changed; see how R.V. tries to show this. "The two prepositions . . . do not necessarily express the difference between transitoriness and duration [? permanence, as Farrar and others], but they *may* do so as matter of language, and the distinction is too much in accordance with the context to be set aside" (Waite, in *Speaker*). Beet says well: "In the history of the world, as in the experience of each individual, God speaks first in the form of Law, 'Do this or die.' When we hear the good news, 'He that believes shall not die,' the voice of condemnation loses its dread power, and *comes to nought.* But the good news of life will remain sounding in our ears for ever."

Ver. 12.—Returns to ver. 4, but "*confidence*" is now "filled out into *hope.*" Also he was charged with insincerity; he repudiates the charge, "I speak openly, plainly, confidently; there is no concealment, nothing underneath."

Ver. 13.—Note that the A.V. of Exod. xxxiv. 33 inserts "*till*"; reading the story as that Moses hid the refulgence of the glory *whilst* he was speaking. The LXX. and Vulgate translate xxxiv. 33 otherwise. Paul follows for his purpose their account, that Moses put on the veil *after* he had finished speaking, to hide, not the unbearable refulgence of the glory, but its waning brightness. In ver. 13 *that which was passing away* (R.V.) does not very definitely go beyond the literal glory mentioned in the narrative. But the further application to which the words so aptly lend themselves, is beginning to come into view.

Ver. 14.—Like the "letters of commendation," or the "triumph and the incense bearers" (ii. 14), the figure of the *veil,* even whilst he is using it, suggests to Paul another distinct, but related, use of it. Like the Tallith—the curious fringed scarf which to this day every born Israelite wears on head or shoulders at public worship—there is a veil on the heart of Israel as they read even the Law. Not merely is its waning glory concealed from them, but even its real Secret, "*the Lord.*"

Ver. 15. **Moses.**—As in Acts xv. 21.

Ver. 16. **Shall turn.**—"Turn *in,*" as Moses did (Exod. xxxiv. 34). What is the nominative? Choose between (1) "*it*" [= their heart]; (2) "*a man,*" R.V. margin; (3) "*Moses*" [= The Old Covenant, or the people of Israel]. (1) most in favour; (2) and (3) are of course true, whether expressed here or not. Note: "*But whensoever,*" etc. (R.V.).

Ver. 17.—"*The Lord*" in the passage and story from the Pentateuch "*is,*" practically, "*the Spirit.*" [Query, "corresponds to the Spirit in my allegory." Thus, accepting (3), As Moses turns in to the Lord (in the narrative), so the Old Covenant turns in to "*the Spirit*" (= the New Covenant, symbolised by its characteristic blessing, as in ver. 6). So "*is*" (Gal. iv. 25).] To Christians the **Lord** [= **Jehovah**] of the Old Testament is Christ. He who turns to Christ, finds that he has met with, and received, the Spirit. Remember the deep unity of Son and Spirit in the undivided Trinity; so that, *e.g.* in Rom. viii. 9, 10—

in redemption language and in regard to redemption facts, the one may often be interchanged with the other. "An administrative, not a personal, identity" (Beet). **Liberty.**—Once more, in a word a paragraph of another letter is condensed: here Gal iv. 1—v. 1 are thus "packed away" into a single phrase.

Ver. 18.—Note again the changing phrases; "*The Spirit of the Lord*" Christ is also Himself "*the Lord the Spirit.*" The name "Lord" belongs to Him also, equally with Father and Son. Observe "*unveiled*," keeping up the story of Exodus. Also notice the "*face*," not the "*heart*," is in this instance without the veil. Difficult, on lexical or grammatical grounds only, to decide between "*beholding*" and "*reflecting.*" Each is supported. [Winer (Moulton), p. 318, thinks that the middle voice fixes the sense as "Beholding (for ourselves) the glory of the Lord (as in a mirror)."] Both are needed for the facts of Christian experience; we must first, like Moses, go in and "behold," before we can come forth and "*reflect.*" Paul is, however, insisting that he (="*we*") has nothing to conceal, as Moses had; that, in fact, he had used "*great boldness of speech.*" Without a veil he had let what glory of the New Covenant he had received, and had to communicate, shine forth; *reflecting* it as Moses did, but not *veiling* it, as did Moses. On the other hand, Farrar, carrying on the thought into iv. 3, 6: "For God had shone in the hearts of His ministers only in order that the bright knowledge which they had caught from gazing, with no intervening veil, on the glory of Christ, might glow for the illumination of the world." In favour of "*beholding*" is the progressive transformation, by assimilation, into conformity to the glory of Christ. [Stanley makes "*from glory*" the *terminus a quo* of the process; "*to glory*" the *terminus ad quem*; the completeness rather than the progressive character of it being in view.] iv. 6 fixes, and expounds, "*the glory of the Lord.*"

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS—Chap.* iii. 1—iv. 6.

This section has as the unifying thought, "*Openness.*"—We find

I. **Open letters.**
II. **A law now open [unveiled].**
III. **An open [unveiled] Gospel.**
IV. **Open character and conduct of the ministers of the Gospel.**

I. 1. *The Corinthians are "letters patent" for Paul.*—Not credentials merely to themselves, assuring them of his true Apostolic standing. [Nor are they merely a letter for his own personal reassurance, in any moment of faintness or discouragement.] They are carried about by him unsealed, "open," to be his credentials to all who will take pains to examine them. [When Sanballat sent "an open letter" to Nehemiah (Neh. vi. 5), the privacy of its contents unsecured by a seal, it was, and was meant to be, an insult. Paul is glad that, as part of the issues of his work, men should read "the epistle from Christ" with which his Divine Master has accredited him.] Happy that ministry whose "fruit" guarantees that there has been no mistake as to the "call." Happy that people whose personal experience of blessing and life received through the human messenger, and whose joyful observation that newly quickened souls are by his words ever being added to the Church, agree to assure them that his letters of ordination, his commission of apostleship, still run in unabated validity. No need, as between them and him, that he should continually be vindicating his true ministerial *status.* "We know what he has done for us; we can no more doubt that he is a true minister, than that through him we have a place in Christ ourselves. Our Paul no true apostle? Nonsense! Look at us! Read us! You who depreciate him may bring your letters from Jerusalem and James, [from Rome or Lambeth, or Conference, or College]; his credentials are sufficient for us. We are his seals."

2. *A real reason,* though not the strongest, *for an open profession of Christ.*—"Secret discipleship," if such a thing were long possible, would be of no service as a "letter of commendation." Something is due to the man, and to the Church, by whose instrumentality the life-giving Spirit has been "*ministered*" to a Christian man. [Very much is due, for the sake of those whom the preacher has still to

quicken by his ministry. "Let your minister be manifestly, and to the gaze of all, *a many-lettered man.* They will hear him the more attentively, if your quickened life in the Spirit accredit him to their heart. For their salvation's sake, be ye an unsealed '*letter*,' which all may peruse, if they will."] Something is due to Christ Who sends him. *He* also needs accrediting to the unsaved. [Though the words do *not* mean "a letter of commendation for Christ" (ver. 3).] A man's changed life should be an **open** letter.

3. *It should be legibly and beautifully written.*—[Drunken man, rolling up against a bishop: "*You* converted me." "Yes, it looks like *my* work, not my Master's."] Too many Christians are at their best badly written letters; often the writing—though true enough—needs some discovering and deciphering. [Like the shabby, thumbed, torn "references" which the professional beggar brings out of his dirty pocket.] Some of these open letters accredit nobody, with any satisfactory evidence. [Poor credentials of the Gospel itself. When God's Love first came to men, with what a perfect Open Letter it came "commended"! (Rom. v. 8).] Because they are a letter not for Paul's sake only, *he* might read fairly the most faulty Corinthian and understand him and do him justice, recognising in him a real work of the "*quickening Spirit.*" But others need to read these "letters," and will not always do it with favourable eyes.

4. *Moses came down from Sinai bearing two God-inscribed slabs of granite,* as the tokens that he had been with God, Who made him His Mediator for Israel; he bore them in his hands. [As Paul's rivals so bore their imposing credentials, perhaps from James.] "Look in my *heart,* Corinthians. See yourselves written there, deeply graven in my affection. 'I have you in my heart' (Phil. i. 7), 'in my heart, to die and live with you' (2 Cor. vii. 3). My love writes you there, on fleshen tables. Your witness, indeed, is not for me only, or chiefly. The tables of Sinai accredited Moses; but they were also Jehovah's 'testimonies' to His own holy nature and will, and the standard of the holiness required of His people. Your '*quickened*' life—'*quickened*' by no mere '*letter*' of my message, but by '*the Spirit*' who infused Himself into it—not only accredits me, but is a witness for Christ, of His mind and good pleasure towards His people. It is an exposition, it ought to be a standard of measurement, of the blessed purpose and contents of the '*new Covenant.*' What is this purpose? To give life; to give the Spirit Who gives that life. The embodiment for the new Order is no mere formal, external Code of rules for conduct, but a Life, with a new Life principle in it. [A *βίος* which is the outgrowth of a *ζωή*, as Gal. v. 25.] The "*letter*" of the code will have its office and its necessary place in such a life, at least in that life's earlier, weaker, formative stages. But the "*glory*" of the new life, and of the new Order to which it belongs, will be realised, partly in the very independence of such helps because of the better, higher, all-comprehending Law of the life within,—the life of the Spirit Who quickens.

II. **The very Law itself was now unveiled.**—Paul and his readers were living in one of the transition times of the world's history. Ceaseless change, death and birth, the New springing out of the Old,—such are the invariable characteristics of the life story of Man and his World. But these were times of specially rapid and significant change. [There are "times and seasons" (Acts i. 7), *periods* of time, and *points* of time; the stretches of duration wherein the great clock is quietly, surely ticking on, and the marked moments when It strikes. Paul lived in a "season"; at one of the points when the striking of the clock proclaimed a new "time" begun.] One of those complete, but not violently, openly, cataclysmatic abolishings of the Old was taking place. [At the cession of Corfu by England to the Greeks, a large and costly and important fortification had first to be demolished. Gun-cotton, then a somewhat new thing in such use, was the agent employed; much curiosity to know what its action would be

Fired by electricity. A dull, deep rumbling heard, but no great, earth-heaving convulsion seen or felt; no masonry flying into the air. But after a few moments it was seen that the immense fortification had quietly disappeared. The destruction of Jerusalem and its temple, the historic cessation of the sacrifices and the Jewish polity, were more really an end visible and catastrophic; but these had not yet taken place. Paul knew that on Calvary and at Pentecost the spark had been fired. He saw the old System disappearing; his Jewish-Christian brethren would not see, and so could not. "*Their eyes were blinded.*" Such critical periods always have men with clearer vision than their fellows; before the rest they discern the times.] The Old System, with its Shekinah-glory, its Sacrificial routine, its laws of clean and unclean, its separate nation physically sealed by circumcision, was fading away, dissolving before men's eyes, becoming plainly a shadowy thing. There was appearing [projected like a new Image, a new picture, on Time's great screen] a New System, in which the one conspicuous thing was a Person, **Christ: "the end of the Law."** The old system was coming to an end, because its various lines of suggestion and teaching had arrived at Christ. The streams of history, prophecy, type, had found their way to the Sea, the end of their journey. The very Decalogue itself had *arrived at* Christ, to stand henceforth by His side, with a John Baptist voice and office, pointing, sending the guilty souls whom it "*condemned*" and "*killed*," to the "Lamb of God" with a "Behold!" Moreover, it had reached One in Whose "Day" the Spirit was to secure for it a new glory, a fulfilment such as it had never received while itself was the distinctive, central fact of the old order.

2. *The old had been a glorious system. The new was to surpass it.*—In no other had God been so clearly revealed to men; as much as Mahometanism is vaunted as an advance upon African fetishism and idolatry, so much was Judaism more gloriously in advance of every other system, past, present, to come, except Christianity. No nation was "so great, or had God *so near* to them," as Israel (Deut. iv. 7), until in Christ God created a Church, a new Israel, and came nearer still. Sin and Holiness had hardly any meaning outside the Old Order of the Law; holiness had hardly any existence. God's character, God's will, God's redeeming purpose, His remedy for the ruin which even the heathen saw, but did not understand,—the light in Israel, at its most dim, had on all these points been a "*glory*" for the old Covenant, with which there was nothing in the world to compare. It is not *Christian* thought, to depreciate the Old Testament. It had been a moon and stars ruling and illuminating the deep night of earth. Now the Sun was arisen, and moon and stars were to lose their lustre in competition with His. [It had been a glorious illuminant for earth's night; now one still better had come. The gas-jet shows as a dull silhouette, when seen projected upon the white, electric-lighted globe.] The revelation of God, of Sin and its Remedy, of the significance and the true goal of man's Life, given to the world in Christ, has no serious competitor amongst the religions of the world. All this was *dramatically* told upon the top of Hermon. For a few brief moments human eyes saw Law, Prophets, Christ, side by side, speaking together of His "decease." Men saw and heard the transfer of testimony and office from the lesser to the Greater. The Shekinah-cloud enveloped all three in its glory; it belonged to them all. When it was past, Moses was gone, and Elijah. The day of the Law and the Prophets was past. "**Jesus only** with themselves." Something of this had been dramatically told at Sinai. Moses had veiled his resplendent face; the glory had waned and waned away beneath the veil; if men might have been permitted to see, they would have seen an ending of the glory caught on the Mount of the Law; though even then it would not have been given to them to see the End of that which was revealed. His day was not yet.

And the Old, though God-given and "*made glorious*," became a bondage, became an idol. Men gazed upon it, and saw nothing in it but itself. Men studied it; they had to defend it, to die for it; they began to pique themselves upon being its faithful guardians. They hugged the dying or dead thing the closer to their hearts, when the life was departing or gone. Their affection became mechanically rigid in its grasp. Their eye grew accustomed to the moonlight night; they resented and refused the day. Their devotion became a slavery; it fettered thought; it blinded the eye; it wove a veil for the very heart. [*All partial truth may.* (To be remembered that God's "partial truth" is absolutely true so far as it goes. Unlike our "partial truth," nothing in it needs unlearning before the new, complementary truth can be added. Our "partial truth" is often false because only relative, and is out of proportion, needing much adjustment before it can be made to fit into a new discovery.) The eye must not lose its power to receive new light, must not fill its vision with the familiar and precious thing so fully that it can see no new object.] How had Paul and his Christian readers escaped? "*With unveiled face*" they beheld with equanimity the glory fading fast from an unveiled Law; nay, with a new sense of "*liberty*" and a larger life. Why? The Spirit had led them into the presence of "*the Lord*" Christ. [Shall He one day so lead Israel in, into the Holy Place where "the Lord" dwells? (ver. 16).] They have come forth again, transformed into the same image, each of them a Moses with resplendent face; [albeit many of them know not how resplendent. See Separate Homily on "Unconscious Goodness."] Their heart has a strange new sense of freedom. The old is still interesting, precious, glorious, not lightly to be cast away; but they have grown into something larger. [The man remembers vividly the day when the youth found himself to have grown past running after his boyish hoop; the woman the day when, with a little shock, she found herself grown too big to play with her splendid doll.] Liberty has come with the manhood of the days of the Spirit.

3. *They see the ending of the Old, because they see that it has reached its End and has lost itself in its Fulfilments.*—Now they see and understand the Law, indeed the entire Old Testament, and see it full of Christ. Familiar experience to every Christian reader of Old Testament. In it he (say) reads some passage, and passes on into the New Testament. Returning to the Old Testament, with his mind and his vision filled with the Christ he has seen there, he comes across his passage again, and finds himself saying, "Why, this might be written of Christ. It is truer of Christ than of the man to whom it originally belongs. Truer of Christ than of any man besides." Or, it is an incident of the narrative; he rubs his eyes and looks wonderingly, "Is this David's history, or Jonah's, that I am reading,—or Christ's?" Or, it is a priest, a prophet, a man, a child; familiar enough; yet, again and again, when, with eyes and heart full of the Christ *into Whose presence he has "turned,"* he reads the Old Testament, he finds the familiar features somehow transfigured. The same, yet somehow different. As if the Old Testament face had become tenanted, possessed, by another personality; as if Another looked out of the eyes of the Old Testament man. And this happens so often, and with such consistency of system and harmony, that a principle establishes itself, "*The Old Testament is full of Christ.*" A tentative, working hypothesis at first, each added fact that falls in with it strengthens the probability of its truth, till it rises to a practical certainty. In the end, the man whose unveiled heart has been in and gazed upon the glory of Christ in the New Covenant revelation—a glory which does not wane and die away as we are gazing on it—finds the presence of Christ, so constantly and so clearly, in the unveiled Law; sees so often the glory of the Old fade away, and almost the very Old itself, until only Christ,

"*the Lord*" in His glory, is left visible; that he wonders how any heart can miss Him in the Old Testament, in its reading and its search. [The man who has the key is almost ashamed of proposing the riddle to another man, it seems so obvious. The hidden face once discovered in the puzzle pictures which amuse childhood, it is then impossible not to see it.] Sometimes language so obviously adapted to contain a larger meaning than was contemplated by the first who used or wrote it,—a vessel so obviously adapted for something larger and fuller than its Old Testament contents; sometimes a "staringly like" anticipation of Christ's person, or work, or Sacrifice, unexpectedly flashing out upon the New Testament reader of the Old Testament; sometimes a real, but fitful, flash of resemblance [like those seen in a "family likeness"], seen, and then disappearing when looked for with closer purpose to discover it; sometimes highways, sometimes byways, of history or suggestion, leading with surprising and unlooked-for directness to Christ;—these things so continually occur and recur, that one cannot "*turn in unto*" even the Old Testament without at every turn meeting Him Who is its End, and therefore its Ending. All this pre-eminently true of "The Law" in its narrower sense. Its ritual system, the very details of its Sanctuary, so persistently, so consistently, lend themselves to suggest Christ and the Gospel; and often with such minuteness of complete suggestion; that, as the instances accumulate, it becomes, even mathematically calculated, almost as $\infty : 1$, that they should merely be coincidences; that the correspondences should be accident, and not Divine design. But to see the Christ there, in the midst of the passing away of the glory of the unveiled "Law" needs the unveiled heart, which as yet Israel does not possess. Such a heart is a gift, part of the life given by the quickening Holy Spirit, Who is *the* characteristic of the New Covenant.

[III. and IV. belong to chap. iv.]

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 4—6.

*Responsibility and Sufficiency.*

I. **The responsibility of ministering the "New Testament."**—1. *The Responsibility of ministering the Old was great.* It was a sacred deposit from God; with real, if incomplete, truth in it. It had a "glory" of origin, of history, of office, and above all it was the root from which sprung Christ and the Gospel (Rom. ix. 4, 5). Judaism was the providential *nidus* of Christianity. When the Virgin Israel had brought forth a Son, "born under the Law," then she had done her greatest work. The Old Covenant had not existed in vain when it yielded up its life in giving historic birth to the New. The "librarians of the world" had had a weighty charge upon them in that age after age they "*ministered*" the written Truth and Law of God. Mosaism had been an episodic fact; for a special purpose it had been grafted on to the main stem of God's redeeming purpose and work (Gal. iii. 19). It had run its course by the side of that main purpose; an "after-thought," a by-thought, providing for a special emergency which had arisen, so far as we may speak thus of any work and thought of God. Yet intrinsically it had been a great, a glorious system, and the responsibility of its "*ministers*," from Moses onward, had been great. And because of the deeper issue which lay in the Law—its condemning effect—does every Christian preacher feel a new responsibility of being in any degree a minister of the "*killing letter*." That it issued in death was a disparagement to the Law, only as this stood compared with the Gospel. Intrinsically it was an honour to the Law that it bore such clear, unflinching testimony to God's holiness of nature and requirement, and also, indirectly, to the honourable possibilities of human nature. ("Man was made to live, then, up to that standard! Man can be

commanded to live up to that, and the command have the reasonableness of possibility!") It was no real disparagement to the Law that it could only guard and train and correct growth, and not give life. Law *per se* can do no more, under any conditions. It is itself a real forerunner, "preparing the way of the Lord" Christ, when it "condemns" and "kills." The Gospel preacher of "the Spirit" needs to build upon the work of the Law. Just in proportion as he knows how, evangelically, to "*minister the letter*," is his work thorough. And no part of his work presses more heavily upon the worthy minister than that of so preaching as to bring the sense of sin home to the conscience. Nothing needs more a sanctified judgment; some consciences are abnormally indurated, some morbidly tender; under the Gospel the demand of the Law must not be over-pressed, any more than it must be understated. If his words may not only kill self-righteousness, but may even slay hope, "*who is sufficient*"? Whether to preach Law or Gospel, man's sin or God's grace, we feel keenly: "*not sufficient of ourselves*," etc. Much greater, then,—

2. *The responsibility of ministering the New is greater.*—The treasure entrusted to him for distribution is more precious than the former. If the Old order had many "goodly pearls," yet the New has the "one pearl, of great price." Is it not easier to misrepresent the Gospel of life than the Law of death? Is there not more liability to make the Gospel too easy than to make the Law too stern? If a man needs wisdom and strength above his own, to preach the Law and to bring men to a sense of sin, how much more to awaken their death into life! To know that men are "dead"; that they must live again in the Spirit, or must abide in death eternally; that upon his skill and fidelity, in some one instance, or upon some one occasion, "*life*" (or death) may depend,—brings him back to Paul's burdened sense of inadequateness for such a task. A responsibility so great becomes to some men a real temptation not to "*use great plainness of speech*," to soften their tongue, to conciliate their hearers, to modify their message.

3. *There is a "sufficiency," however, even for this. "Through Christ," "To Godward."*—Very graphic. He "stands in the presence of God." All the minister's work is done as though He were seen looking on. At every point the worker offers his work to God, with a perpetually renewed devotion of it to His glory and service. He has himself been "*converted to God*" (Acts xv. 19), turned about, and set Godward. He does his work, *facing Godward* always. "Sets the Lord always before him," and so is not "moved" even by a sense of personal inadequateness to his task, or by the fear of man, or by the consideration of the fateful issues which hang upon his ministry. He turns all his work toward God; seeks to give it a Godward direction. There is a supply of strength, in this realisation of Him Who is invisible. The man whose life and thought are filled with, and lifted up to the level of, "the powers of the world to come," feels little force, whether deterrent or alluring, in the opinion of man, be it favourable or unfavourable. His soul is liberated from the slavery to which regard for man's favour subjects the heart. He speaks out fearlessly, clearly, without diminishing or admixture, with "great boldness of speech," the message he has first heard from God. [He who "sanctifies Christ as Lord in his heart" will not fear "men's fear" (1 Pet. iii. 14, 15).] That man has laid hold of the secret of steadfastness in opinion, of courage in utterance, of stability of character, of unwearying continuance in labour, who has come into, and abides in, the presence of God, and who directs himself and his every act Godward. He sees God; he is blind to man. "The Master praises; what are men?" And this is "*through Christ.*" Paul comes in nowhere! All communication between God and man has from the first been mediatorial, "*through Christ.*" All God's advances toward man have been made along that path of approach; man has

not—never has had—any way to "a Father" but this. Christ has all along been the great underlying Condition, the great Presupposition, in all intercourse between God and man. Paul's strength, his endowment of adequacy for his responsible task,—he expects it, and receives it through this one, only Channel. He is

> "Strong in the strength which God supplies
> Through His Eternal Son."

This alone ever makes a man "*able*" as a "*minister of the new covenant.*" This may co-exist with, and be the infused life and efficiency of, great natural fitness,—of gift, temperament, education, social position, sacred office; it can make all these its vehicles and organs, and in so doing puts on them their highest honour. But it is independent of these; and whether with or without them is the essential requisite. There is no "*sufficiency,*" where this is not found. The regard steadfastly directed Godward, the ceaselessly renewed supply of grace through the one Channel, Christ,—these alone will enable a man to bear the burden of the ministration, whether of Law or Gospel; certainly of the Gospel, and of an ambassadorship wherein his words force men upon sharp, decisive verdicts and issues; this alone will sustain a man who bears about a Gospel in whose words are certainly inherent a power to kill, or to quicken with the fulness of the life of the Spirit.

## *OUTLINE OF HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 7—11.

"*Glorious and More Glorious.*"

**Introduction.**—1. The Infinite Father has made a special revelation of Himself to His human offspring. 2. This has *mainly* come through two great general channels—Moses and Christ. 3. The special revelation of Himself, as it came through Christ, far transcends in glory the form it assumed as it came through Moses.

I. **Glorious as it came through Moses.**—Evidenced by four things. 1. The wonderful display of Divinity attending the expression of it on Mount Sinai. 2. The magnificence of its religious scenes and celebrations. 3. The stupendous miracles that stand in connection with it. 4. The splendid intellects which were employed in connection with it.

II. **More glorious as it appears in connection with Christ.**—1. The Christian form of revelation is *more adapted to give life* than is the Mosaic. "Millions, I will hope, were quickened by" the Mosaic. But men frequently died *spiritually* under it. Cf. the effect of an address from an ancient prophet, with the words of Christ, spoken through Peter on the Day of Pentecost. 2. The Christian form of revelation is *more emphatically spirit* than the Mosaic. In the Mosaic there was spirit; the elements of eternal truth, ethical and religious, were there, but nearly overlaid with ceremonial. In Christianity only Baptism and the Supper; and it throbs through every sentence with the eternal spirit of truth. [This is all very inadequate and inexact exegesis. It should be "Spirit."] 3. *Is more restorative.* 4. *Is more lasting.* Moses is no longer our Master. Christianity is the permanent system; the final revelation of God to our world. There is nothing to succeed it.

**Application.**—1. Do not go to Moses to expound Christ. 2. Nor to support opinions (*e.g.* war, slavery, etc.) which cannot be supported from Christ's Gospel. 3. The immense responsibility of men who have the Gospel. 4. The glorious position of a true Gospel minister.—*In abstract, from "Homilist," New Series,* ii. 421.

## SEPARATE HOMILIES.

Ver. 6. *The Deadly Letter; the Life-giving Spirit.*

I. **What this does mean.**

II. **What it does not mean.**

I. 1. Like many another phrase in this chapter, this particular saying is a summary of an extended paragraph found elsewhere in the pages of St. Paul. Rom. vii. is concentrated into it. Not that this is a germ afterwards deliberately expanded into a paragraph. The truth which underlies germ and expansion, is habitual, fundamental, to all Paul's thinking about Christian experience. Here it crops up at the surface in a phrase; there it lies, of set purpose all laid bare and exposed to examination. 2. Paul's own experience is concentrated into it. Acts ix., with its companion, complementary, accounts in xxii. and xxvi., give the externals of Paul's "conversion." In Phil. iii. 4-11 (particularly ver. 7) he analyses the inner process, and in ver. 7 precisely fixes the critical point around which his new relation to God and the outflowing new life turn. In Rom. vii. 7—viii. 4, whilst no doubt sketching a universal programme of the moral revolution culminating in Regeneration, and stating a universal formula of the conversion process, he is nevertheless drawing upon his memories of the heart-searchings of the three days' darkness in Damascus, and of the earlier days when he felt the prick of the Master's goad and kicked against it. Every man's conversion is "universal." 3. He had "profited in the Jew's religion above many his equals" (Gal. i. 14). He had "lived a Pharisee," and that, we may believe, of the best type. Christ's charges of hypocrisy by no means lay against all Pharisees. These were not all "whited sepulchres." Yet "blameless as he was in all the righteousness of the Law,"—and, let it be noted, it is with a *Christian* conscience reviewing these days, that he thus pronounces upon his Jewish life,—the Talmud and the New Testament, with fullest agreement in their evidence enable us to appreciate how almost entirely external was the righteousness he thus recalls; how very largely it amounted to a minutely faithful fulfilment of Rabbinical refinements upon the original legislation of Moses, which were childishly frivolous, when they were not an actual offence to the Divinity of that sacred code. 4. There arrived a day when the "commandment came," particularly the "Tenth" of the "Words" of the Decalogue, which in effect sums up all the prohibitive enactments of the Divine Law; laying its forbiding hand upon every "coveting" of the natural heart for that which is against the mind and will of God, and the beneficent moral order of His world. For the first time, any adequate "knowledge of sin" awoke within the heart of Paul; it "came by the law." He had hardly known that such a thing as sin was in him; he had done it so naturally that it excited no notice. Now the Law had been the revealer of sin. In the light of this new discovery the robe of his own righteousness showed seamy, "shabby," utterly unfit for a garment in which a man might present himself before God. He discovered that whilst he had been busy in fulfilling a round of *minutiæ* of ordinances, even to learn which was an exercise and a study to fill a long and laborious lifetime, he had missed altogether the reality of obedience; that sin and righteousness lay quite apart from any mere mechanical fulfilment of such a code, or of any code, as such; that the very motives of the fulfilment, and the complacent satisfaction into which it was reviewed, were *self*-centered,—"gains to *me*"; —pride! Saul the Pharisee fell slain at the feet, and by the stroke, of the Law, as it stood before him for the first time "spiritual," "holy, just, and good." All self-complacency was gone from, and was from that moment impossible to, the man who now learned, "I am carnal, sold under sin." 5. And a further stage was reached immediately.

To attempt to set things right was the death of hope; the discovery of the wrong had been the death of peace. The man discovered himself helpless and a slave. Sin held him under its power. Resolve as he might, hate himself for his moral impotence as he might, bewail the moral division within him as he might, struggle as he might, he seemed to have no power but to sin. The discrepancy between the holy Law of God and his own unholy life and heart grew more and more glaring as the light came more clear and full. A new sinfulness was added to sinful acts, in that they were now done in the full light of a known command. And the deepest depth of self-slaying discovery was touched when he found the very commandment, whether precept or prohibition, arousing an innate opposition to its holy requirement; adding a new attractiveness to the *forbidden* fruit; and with a consuming intensity inflaming desire for it. And such sinfulness stood out clearly as "death," in the new light of the unveiled Law. What had he ever done but sin! What could he hope to do but sin! What could he promise or purpose or perform,—he whose very heart found a new desireableness given to prohibited action! [No "bread so pleasant" as that "eaten in secret." ("But you often want to change your baker!" said Jackson Wray.) No liquor so good as that which was smuggled. No garden so fair as that which is over the fence!] 6. This a universal experience. Even moralists, who are only half serious, like Gay in his fable of the young cock, or whose society verse lapses into occasional earnestness like his who cried, "*Meliora video proboque, deteriora sequor.*" But all noble souls feel it. "I certainly have two souls, for if there were only one, it surely could not be at the same time good and bad, nor could it at the same time love good and base actions, and also at the very same time wish the very same thing, and not desire to put the wish into action; but evidently there are two souls, and if the good soul gets the upper hand, then good will be done, and if the evil than shameful actions will be perpetrated" (Xenophon, *Cyropedia*, vi.). Action is always lower than knowledge, in the noblest heathen. "I should have lived better than I have done, if I had always followed the monitions of the gods" (Marcus Aurelius, *Conf.*). "The *wages* of sin is death." And not that only, but, "*To be carnally minded* is death." 7. Why could there not have been "a commandment given bringing life"? (*a*) Partly from the very nature and office of Law. It is directory, educational, not enabling. It is the model which trains the artistic sense; but the artistic sense and faculty cannot be *given* by the most perfect model. It is the standard which enables the student to measure his progress and to set before him the goal at which he is to aim. But the real conforming power, the real source of effort and endeavour, are within himself. Truth, beauty—at all events, moral truth, moral beauty—are external to the man, external to *all* men; and are altogether independent of personal, or racial, or interested estimate and approbation. They are of no school, of no age, of no one heart or intellect; they are universal, and of God. The Law is the fingerpost which points out, the wall of definition and of defence on either side of, the one Way of Life, as the Creator understands "Life" and designed "Life" for man. But the will and power to walk in the "Way" are within the man himself. The Law declares with authority what is Obedience, but only in a secondary sense does it offer any help to Obedience; just in that it makes the path definite, and would at once indicate divergence. The actual, concrete, Jewish "Law" said little about forgiveness, and offered no direct help to holiness. (*b*) But the more effectual reason why not, is found in the morally perverted heart and will of man. What was in design educational, for that reason became in fact condemnatory. The directorial *rule* reveals and convicts the discrepancies of the actually irregular line of life. The rebellion of the heart against

restraint makes the Law irksome instead of helpful. The hedge which marks out the path for the willing traveller must pierce with its sharp thorns the man who is bent upon breaking through into the wide space—the "liberty"—on either hand beyond. The silly bird which will take its cage for a prison instead of a home; which will dash itself, perhaps even to its death, against bars which were intended for a protection, but in which it will only see a restriction upon its freedom; must hurt itself. If the letter "kills," it is because the evil heart in man will not accept and use it as the guide of wise, safe, happy living, the guide to Life; because the heart resents its attempt to support inexperience and weakness, and to educate the moral sense, and its necessary exposure of moral immaturity, or failure, or revolt. 8. "To be spiritually minded—to mind the things of the Spirit—is Life." "It is the Spirit that quickeneth." He Who said so, and also that "the Flesh profiteth nothing," is Himself the High Priest of a system, a new Law, "not of a *carnal* commandment, but of an endless *life*" (Heb. vii. 16). "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" [The cry of the shipwrecked man straining his eyes for the token of a sail, or for the breaking of the day. It is the eager longing of Wellington at Waterloo for the promised Prussian help.] The answer comes, "*Through* Jesus Christ our Lord!" which is expounded further on (viii. 2). "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." "In Christ Jesus;" the secret of Life and of the unity between Law and Life is there. (More of this under ver. 17.) A new motive springs up in the heart where "the love of God is shed abroad by the Spirit which He hath given" (Rom. v. 5). "We love Him because" —as on that Spirit's authority we are made to know—"He first loved us." And there is a new hope; for the same Spirit who brings peace, brings also power. The will is enabled with a new force. Sin no longer "has dominion"; the man is no longer "sold under sin." A new direction to thought; a new attraction for the affections; a new bias and bent to the will. All the life, all the natural life, obeys a new directing principle, and becomes interfused with that yet truer life which is Life indeed. Peace, hope, liberty, victory,—all by the indwelling of the quickening Spirit. Deep problems of mental science underlie the method by which the fact of the adopting love of God towards the penitent, pardoned sinner is communicated to the heart; or by which the will is reinforced as with a power coming distinctly *ab extra*. But the fact is abundantly verified. Experience in every Church and age, and in thousands of cases of every variety of type and temperament, lights up the Scripture declaration. The Scripture declarations guard, in their turn, from the vagaries of unregulated, extravagant, or merely viciously personal, "experience." And that a new idea should be a new motive, transforming a man, transfiguring his life, begetting a new life, is but a particular instance of a widely obtaining law. The new idea, the new power, are the gift and work of the Spirit Who is in the man who is in "Christ." "*The Spirit giveth life.*"

II. 1. Kingsley wrote to one of his curates—"a very new curate"—what has an applicability far beyond its original occasion: "Let not Swedenborg, or any other man, argue you out of the scientific canon that to understand the spirit of Scripture or any other words, you must first understand the letter. If the spirit is to be found anywhere, it is to be found by putting yourself in the place of the listeners, and seeing what the words would have meant to them. Then take that meaning as an instance (possibly a lower one) of a universal spiritual law, true for all men, and may God give you wisdom for the process of induction by which the law is to be discovered" (*Life*, ii. 95). Allegorising has run mad, and has in some quarters given a bad name to everything but

the barest, most meagre, historical, naturalistic reading of what are indeed ancient books, but are very much besides. The Philonian method dealt with the Old Testament, the Origenic dealt with New and Old, in a fashion which made the stories of the Book very little more than so much convenient framework, and the persons so many happily serviceable starting-points, for fine theorising or fanciful moralising, whose value in no way depended upon the historicity or otherwise of the story or the saying which gave form and colour to the teaching. Sound allegorising is nothing but the sober, Spirit-guided development of the general principles which are carried by particular instances. The Scripture teaches by the concrete—the story, the biography—rather than by the abstract. [*E.g.* we need, and might have had, a chapter in *A Treatise of Christian Ethics* headed, "The Relation between Ignorance and Responsibility, and between Conscientiousness and Guilt." Instead, we have the conscientious "chief of sinners," Saul of Tarsus, and the prayer of the Redeemer on His cross for those who "knew not" what they did.] There are widening circles of application, all starting from the one central fact or truth, with a widening radius. The mischievous, untrue allegorising forsakes the centre, or disdains and denies it. The "letter" is the merely accidental, and more or less convenient, literary vehicle; the "spirit," so called, the truth to be taught, is the alone really valuable and important. The erroneous thing is, so to say, a literary Gnosticism which refines away, or denies, the historic Word, hoping to retain the Idea; as the theologic Gnosticism refined away, or denied, the real humanity of the Divine Christ, and tried to retain a Divinity whose manifestation to man was but a phantom. Yet, as the Divinity of the Incarnate One must not be denied, and the humanity overprized; so the Letter is not all.

2. *Loyalty to the written Word.*—There is a "spirit" which has become incarnate in the "letter." Whatever be the philosophic decision of the question whether or not words are, to the man himself, indispensable to thought; as a fact God's thoughts have come to us in words. They have come to us in a Book. The experiment of the race all goes to show that outside this Book there is no certain, no clear knowledge, of the mind and will of God. Nature speaks with a stammer, and is intelligible, to any practical effect, only to those who have heard from the Book what it is she has to say. As indistinct, as variable, as scanty, of as little practical service, are the utterances of the "natural" conscience. Its "truths," "innate ideas," need interpreting and checking by the external Word. The witness of no two consciences agrees long together. God, duty, right, the hereafter of man,—if on these topics men forsake the written Word, there is no verifiable truth, none authoritative except to the man who propounds it—if even to him. It is not slavery to the "letter," to refuse to go beyond the distinct teaching of the Bible, either by direct statement or by fair and necessary inference. That Book certainly gives but a narrow standing ground of dry land amidst a far-stretching, surrounding ocean of mystery. It is but a question of a step or two more beyond his fellows, when, forsaking this, the tallest man amongst them wades out into the depths, and finds himself out of his depth, and progress impossible. Or, to change the figure, there is no sure, safe walking out into these depths, except so far as the inquirer keeps hold of the rope which is fast to the Bible. Practically all the facts upon which religion can base itself, have for all the Christian centuries been long complete; all lie within the area of the completed "letter." No new facts can be looked for; all that can be done is to examine these with ever fresh scrutiny, to see whether

there may be in them anything which has hitherto escaped discovery. No such supplement, no such corrective appendix, is from time to time issued, whether in the larger knowledge of the universe, or in the intuitions of man's heart, as may yield us something, or all, of the original Work. Christianity can never dispense with its foundation documents. The Christian speculator, during his excursions into the regions of the mysterious or the unknown, must never lose touch with his base, as the soldiers say. To be loyal to the Word is not to "kill," but to assist, to nourish, to protect, knowledge. Not, "What do I think? what do my intuitions, my moral sense, teach me." Not, "What do I *feel* must be true?" But, "What does God—not merely a Book—say?"

3. *The historical Christ and "the Christian idea."*—Schelling (quoted in Luthardt, *Saving Truths*, p. 252), on the analogous hope to preserve the "ideas" of Christianity, whether or not the historical Christ be believed in and retained, says: "How frequently has not the historical character of Christianity been declared to be heathenish (not its external, but its higher facts, *e.g.*, the pre-existence, the pre-mundane being of Christ, His position as Son of God), and on that account, as that which is no longer compatible with modern thought? *The very essence of Christianity is, however, its historical character*, not the ordinary part of its history, as, *e.g.*, that its Founder was born under Augustus, died under Tiberius, but that higher history on which it properly rests, and which is its peculiar matter. I call it a higher history, for the true subject-matter of Christianity is a history in which divinity is implicated—a Divine history. That would be but a poor explanation, and entirely destructive of the peculiarity of Christianity, which should distinguish between the *doctrinal* and the historical, and consider the former the essential and special matter, and the latter as mere form and clothing. The history is not merely incidental to the doctrine, it is the doctrine itself. The doctrinal matter, which might perhaps remain after the excision of the historical, as, *e.g.*, the general doctrine of a personal God, such as even rational theology sometimes admits, or the morality of Christianity would be nothing peculiar, nothing distinctive; . . . the history is the distinctive feature of Christianity. It is altogether incongruous to speak only of the teaching of Christ. The chief matter of Christianity is Christ Himself; not what He says, but what He is, what He did. Christianity is not directly *a body of doctrine*, it is a thing, an object; doctrine is but the expression of the *thing*." [Schelling in some degree thus meets by anticipation the position of Ritschl. Luthardt goes on to speak of a "so-called liberal theology, which really sees nothing more in Christianity than a certain general religious feeling, or the mere force of civilisation."]

4. *Dogma and religion.*—There is an embodiment of truth in formal statements of doctrinal confessions and creeds which is sometimes regarded as not helpful to, but as the death of, religious life, and indeed of the interests of truth itself. And in this connection the text is often quoted. [The use of this verse sometimes made, with that application, is a flagrant instance of the employment of the mere words of Scripture, apart from the context and connection, and without regard to the rule which requires some real analogy between the primary meaning of the passage and the matter to which it is sought to apply it. It was not *because* the Law of Moses was *written*, and so was fixed in unchanging record upon the tables of Sinai, that it wrought death; the Spirit which works life uses as His instrument a written Word.] It is, in reply, pointed out that what is known of any truth, can be stated in exact form, and demands to be so stated, and that the mind inevitably seeks to systematise its knowledge—to unify it. It is pointed out that if truth be objective,

if, *e.g.*, it be a real disclosure of a fact of God's government of mankind in Christ, then once made, once ascertained to man, it abides true, and that putting it into formal shape and statement, or embodying it in a creed, is no more than Science does with its accumulating *corpus* of ascertained truth. It endeavours unceasingly to put into exact expression, and to co-ordinate into systematic relationship and statement, the results at which, from its own *data*, and by its own proper methods, it from time to time definitely arrives. It is urged that if Theology too be a science, if it deals with a section of the whole universe of facts which is capable of exact study, with its own appropriate methods, then results once arrived at abide valid, and not less so that formal, or confessional, expression has been given to them. If "Justification by faith" be really the method of a sinner's acceptance with God, then it is of no age or Church; and if that formulation of God's method be Scriptural, it is not to be challenged or set aside as a passing, or only relatively true, form of statement. If between the death of Christ and the pardon of sin there once be revealed or ascertained a relation which is independent of any act or feeling or change in the sinner himself, then true once this is true always. In this instance well appears what gives occasion to, and such justification as there may be found for, the revolt against the letter. In endeavouring to state this relation between the death of Christ and sin, it has been forgotten that all the phraseology, even though borrowed from Scripture, is analogical, drawing from the relations between man and man, a mutually corrective, mutually expository, and complementary series of illustrations for the relation between the sinner and God. It has been forgotten how imperfectly the whole "scheme" of the Atonement is revealed or comprehensible. There has been an unwise insistence on some particular mode of statement; there has above all been a zeal for one's own particular phraseology and confessional form which has made the form everything, or at least has made it overshadow altogether the truth which this was designed to express or guard. But to remember this is far removed from any demand that all creeds, and the very statements of Scripture themselves, should be thrown afresh into the melting-pot, and be continually in a state of flux, nothing ever cast into permanent mould; and this only lest instead of the living, "growing" thing, there should come out the dead cult, to be the object of a truth-dishonouring, God-dishonouring idolatry of the "letter." The "letter" is the body of "the spirit." Can the spirit exist without a body? Without its own body? Is the identity of the body part of the unchanging identity of the truth? [As in the case of the ceaseless change of the component particles of the human body, whose ceaseless flux does not affect the identity, so in this case the essential form remains; the changing "body" does clothe the same truth; and receives its shape from the same *informing* truth. A spirit freed from, and independent of, the letter —is it parallel to the grotesque idea of Carroll in *Alice in Wonderland*, who imagines a *grin* which remains when the *cat* has faded away?]

Ver. 6. "*Letter and spirit.*"—"*Able ministers*" misleading, to our ears. Connect closely with "sufficient," "sufficiency." "Killeth" cannot have so inadequate a reference as to the frequency of the death penalty under the Law.

I. **Divine commands alone cannot produce obedience.**—Owing to an imperfection not in the Law, but in human nature, which does not yield to the obligation. *Conscience* is on the side of the Law, but is *overborne by the baser nature.* The habitual failure of conscience produces habitual disquiet and misery, a constant sense of discord, a consciousness of powerlessness against evil;—**Death.** The *Law* even *became the occasion of sin. Prohibition provokes the natural heart* and irritates it

to impatience of restraint. The restive horse rears against the bridle; at last throws off its rider. Then follows the licence of self-will, — **Death.** *Christianity has a quickening power.* The Law was inaugurated by the code of the Ten Words; Christianity by the code of a Perfect Human Life exhibited in Christ [written out on the fleshen tables of His heart and blameless life]. Christ not only obeyed the Law with an absolutely perfect obedience, but showed its new and sublimer meaning. Thus the code of human duty is presented in a form most intimate and intelligible and affecting. Christianity quickens *by a secret influence on the heart.* The higher nature receives an increase of power. Conscience is afresh enthroned, and governs; the Law is obeyed not so much because it is obligatory, but because it is loved. As natural weakness requires aid it turns ever anew to the Divine Source of strength, till the lower nature becomes subjugated, and the higher triumphant.

II. **The intellectual deficiency and mischievousness of mere writing as a means of instruction.**—Correspondence is at best a poor comfort in separation; is often obscure, and open to misinterpretation; the writer cannot be appealed to. An ancient writing, a holy writing, and that in translation, leaves many openings for misunderstanding and consequent mistake. Technical theological terms sometimes hinder spiritual life and growth, or kill them. 1. They were perhaps originally only imperfectly correspondent to the truth, and may come to be regarded with a reverence which belongs only to the words of Scripture, a reverence often innocent of their real sense. Hearers do not recognise old truth in new phraseology, and crucify the preacher. 2. Knowledge of, and sympathy with, the writer is indispensable to the understanding of his writings. So the knowledge of the Divine Author and the inspiration of His Spirit, are necessary to the interpretation of the Bible. The Christian man, and he only, is in a position to understand, and live by, the Scriptures. In constant contact with the Spirit, he is a constant recipient of moral and intellectual life. 3. Paul is not only the trustee of a Book, but the dispenser of the Spirit. What a noble view of the Christian ministry!—*From "Homilist," Third Series,* ii. 101 *sqq.*

Ver. 6. "*Ministers of the New Covenant.*"

I. **Not of Naturalism.**—Christianity is the grand subject of all true modern ministries, the one primary *text* of religious discourses the world over, the ages through. Had man retained primitive innocence, Nature would have been that grand text; budding earth, sparkling skies, murmuring brook, booming billow, beasts of the forest, fowls of heaven. Men would have seen in Nature what they cannot see now, true ideas of God; they would have found there food for souls. All the parts of material nature would have been regarded as embodiments of Divine thought and symbols of eternal truth. But, as it is, they cannot reach the spiritual significance of nature; if they could, it would not meet their spiritual exigencies or improve their spiritual condition. [How many sermons have *nothing distinctively Christian,*—in the topics they discuss; in their method of discussing even topics derived from Scripture; in their standards of judgment of men and conduct; in their lessons inculcated! *Sermons* to *the Natural Man* is a good and worthy book; but it is by a "spiritual" man. There are "Sermons by the Natural Man to the Natural Man." The "natural" man does not mind "natural" preaching. They who preach thus are sure of a *clientèle.* Such preachers at least rouse no antagonism in the natural heart. **Anybody** is "sufficient for" **these** things! (Cf. ii. 16).]

II. **Not of Judaism.**—It flamed, a grand torch for Truth, breaking the moral darkness of successive generations, and lighted great multitudes of

souls into the calm heaven of eternity. But it is "done away." [No man formally preaches Judaism. But there is a style of experience and a scale of enjoyment in the Divine life which is Jewish—Old Testament—not Christian. The man who is righteous only by shaping his course and character according to external commands, who can do nothing, and decide nothing, without a "text," a positive plain rule, is a Jew, not a Christian, in the principle of his holiness. He who is hoping to sin and repent and find pardon, only then to sin and repent again, is living in the Jewish order, whilst the Christian covenant has now brought a larger, victorious grace. He who is only a penitent, and has not found or expected a peace which is a matter of consciousness, has not passed the John Baptist stage of the order of the dispensations. Much current, conventional, respectable morality is Jewish, the morality rebuked and superseded in the Sermon on the Mount by, "*I* say, unto *you*." The thinker who only sees a Jesus of Nazareth, is a Jew (perhaps only a Pilate), not a Christian. He who calls the Spirit "it," not "He" (John xv., xvi.), who speaks of, and prays for, the Spirit to be "poured out," and the like, should at least remember that this is Old Testament thought and language, still employed although Christ, the Introducer of the personal Holy Ghost to the Church, has spoken and done His work. Preachers in their doctrine, their people in their experience, need still to beware of making up their bread, or feeding upon a spiritual staff of life, with "the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." It is still on active sale in the world's religious bread-shops.]—*Founded upon a paragraph in "Homilist," Third Series*, ix. 122.

Ver. 17. *The Liberty of the Spirit. "Where the Spirit," etc.*—"*The Spirit*" is the Holy Spirit; the characteristic, crowning privilege of the Christian dispensation. "*The Lord*" is the Lord Christ. The verse is another of the incidental, compressed embodiments of the habitual thought of Paul. We see it expounded by him in two leading passages.

I. **The Law of Moses is a system of bondage; the Gospel is a system of liberty** (Gal. iii. 1—v. 6).—1. Peter on the Mount of Transfiguration would have kept Moses *and* Elijah *and* Christ! Law and Prophets and Gospel! Daybreak, Dawn, Day, all together. Moon and stars in all their number and glory, after the Sun was risen. He "knew not what he said," indeed. And the Conservative, old-school, Jewish Christians who followed Paul into Galatia, would have tried the same impossible combination also. They were representatives of a large class who, in all times of revolutionary change, are not indeed insensible to the value and truth of the new order, but who are also, from long habit and honest appreciation, reluctant to part with the old, and are slow to take in the fact that the old is hopelessly past as to its form, whilst all that was really valuable in it is taken up by and into the new. The first time we hear of them, their line was definitely stated: "Except ye [Gentiles] be circumcised . . . ye cannot be saved" (Acts xv. 1, 5). After a long conference, Peter turned the vote upon the question by a speech in which he declared—and appealed to the confirmatory knowledge of all his hearers—the old system "a yoke which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear." Paul will have none of it for his Galatians. It is "a different gospel"; a true *hetero*doxy. 2. The case has its analogies to-day, wherever the externals of religion are so emphasised as to become for their own sake matters whose observance is righteousness, and their neglect sin. There are still consciences greatly distressed if one tittle of a cumbersome round of external ordinances has by any chance been forgotten, or has for any reason gone (blamelessly) unfulfilled. It is, moreover, easier to perform a round of duties, catalogued and prescribed and

"ticked off" in the day's list as each is accomplished, than to cultivate the holy life within, to wage the unceasing warfare there and to keep up the incessant guard over one's own spirit. A piece of external asceticism is easier than an act of merely inward self-denial. To keep the Galatian converts at such a round of externalism was to keep them at a low level, and to make their life one of only an elementary type. For Galatians to assume the burden of the Mosaic ritual, was for men to put themselves into the position of children learning their A B C; it was for the heir who has come of age to put himself again under the tutors and governors and school-slave. These things had had their meaning, but the Gospel had evacuated them of meaning; even the sacred sign and seal, circumcision, was now nothing but a mutilation or a piece of surgery. For the man to tie himself to the "go-cart" which had supported the child's tottering steps into steady walking, is not only folly; the man feels it a bondage. 3. And these Jewish teachers made the bondage a more serious one still. "**Except . . . ye cannot be saved.**" That the tedious, burdensome, often frivolously minute, Rabbinical glosses upon the original Law, as well as that Original itself, should be matters on which salvation hinged, was as serious as that it should be supposed (say) that sin can with us be atoned for by any round of external or ascetic actions. Serious, because it seemed to imply that the work of Christ was not by itself the sufficient ground of the sinner's safety; that He needed a co-ordinate ground of acceptance with God to complement His work. And serious because the impossibility, too often most sadly verified by the most earnest souls, of keeping the Law, made salvation on this basis and condition impossible. "Away with it all! Stand fast in your liberty. . . . Be not entangled again" (Gal. v. 1). "The dispensation of the Spirit knows nothing of such parallel requirements in addition to, in competition with, the simple ones of Repentance and Faith, which He will also help you to fulfil." Under the dispensation of the Spirit there must be no entangling of the soul with a system of externalisms or ceremonial, presumed in any sense to have merit attached to their fulfilment. "Ye are called unto Liberty!" 4. Under another aspect the Galatian controversy raised a wider, a universal, question. There are always two conceivable ways —two only—of finding for oneself a standing before a holy God. The one is by *doing*, by our own acts and their merit; the other by *believing*, by resting alone on the act and merit of Another. The "Jewish" and the "Gospel" plan respectively. "Faith and Works" is no stock theological topic of discussion. It is no academic issue which is raised. It is the vitally and perennially interesting one, always raised so soon as a man understands Sin, and himself, as a Sinner. The natural heart always propounds "Salvation by Works," even when it has never heard of the term. For the acceptance of a guilty sinner—his justification before God—the way is now shorter. The Spirit teaches every man who will learn, that he need not encumber himself—as it is quite useless to do—with any fancied store of things he has done—or has not done—of things he has been—or has not been. As regards the past and its guilt before God, he is now free to find mercy and acceptance forthwith in the merit of Christ.

II. **A larger, more generalised, thoroughly universal treatment of "bondage" and "liberty"** appears in Rom. viii. 14-16. The antithesis between "servant" and "son" appears in the Galatian passage. But in the Roman letter the local colouring, the temporary shape, of the question is gone. Nothing is left but the sinner, whether Jew or Gentile, passing from the status and experiences of a servant, a bond-servant, of God into that of a son of God. There is a new name for the man, "child"; a new name for God, "Abba." It is the summation

in the life-history of the individual of the moral education of the race. Paul and his readers stood historically at the meeting-place of two stages in God's leading of the world. Until the Day of the Spirit all God's most holy and devoted people had been His servants. No most favoured one ever ventured, under that earlier order, to apply the name "Father" to God. The name "Father" rarely occurs at all, and never as the appellation of God habitually on the lips of an individual. "Like as a father, etc.," "Doubtless Thou art **our** Father," are rare expressions in the Old Testament, and are far beneath the privileged common use of the name "Abba," which is for those who are no longer "servants," but "sons." David never said, as every Christian does, "Father." And the converted man has his Old Testament stage too. Too many earnest people of God stop there, in these days of New Testament grace. They have received the Spirit, indeed. In their heart is many "a good thing towards the Lord their God." They serve with a dutiful devotion, that after all is only "duty." They ought to serve; they must serve. "These many years do I *serve* thee." The son who talks and feels thus, is a servant still. The Spirit is in them a "Spirit of bondage." And pre-eminently such is He to the awakened man, whose unavailing struggle with himself and the sin of his "flesh" is so graphically portrayed in chap. vii. The first impulse of the man to whom for the first time comes the knowledge of sin to any practical purpose, is to reform—to set himself to do right for the future. And his first and speedy discovery is that he cannot. He is not his own master. He *must* "serve sin." He once neither knew nor fought against sin. Now he knows and fights and falls. Habits are iron bonds which he *cannot* break. Temptations are assaults to which he is dragged into yielding, as if by a power of evil within him. It is no "law of Moses" only, or chiefly. It is a "law of sin" in his members. Sin is known by every awakened man as not only a guilt and a defilement, but as a power, a bondage. The new life of the Spirit, the new life in Christ, brings a new power and a new liberty. The bondage is broken, "that henceforth he should not serve sin." The Spirit Who "witnesses" that he is "a *child* of God," and not a servant in his relation to God any longer, Who puts into his lips the new —the *child's*—name for God, "Father," and makes his heart and love those of a child towards God, releases him and energises him for the child's life and service. The service is not less faithful and devoted than before, now that he is "a child" of God; but the "bondage" is gone out of it. In a perfect family life, in perfect filial love, the dutiful "bondage" and respectful "fear" of the servants are not found in the children. They have a larger, freer life, one which, sure of itself in the happy instinct of a loving heart, has not even an overshadowing, haunting, fettering fear of displeasing the father. The Spirit of the Lord is a "Spirit of adoption"—of sonship. Not only are the limbs free from the fetters of habit and from sin's power. The heart is free, with the natural, unconscious, perfect liberty of the child in the home. This leads up to

III. **Liberty from Law in the Christian life.**—1. James gives us, "*The perfect Law of Liberty.*" There is an ideal of Christian life in which the soul is "filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" [Col. i. 9, followed up by the happy consequences in life and practice enumerated in ver. 10]; in which "an unction from the Holy One" so "teaches all things" that the man of God "needeth not that any man should teach him"; in which the very instincts of the heart "renewed in *knowledge*, after the image" of God would be a sufficient directory for all Christian living, passing continually the enactments of a perfect legislation within the parliament house of the inner man; when the heart knows and loves, always, and to the last degree of detail,

what God wills; when the law of God without, and the heart and will within, coincide in their promptings; when the law and the love lie perfectly, closely, side by side; when the heart "runs in the way of God's commandments." It is clear that such a life in ideal needs no external direction, and feels no restraint. [The law-abiding citizen goes through life ignorant of very much of the legislation of his country, and finding nothing irksome or ungrateful about obedience to it; so perfectly obeying that obedience or law not are adverted to.] 2. But that is ideal, though approached more and more nearly as the life of the "son" —not the "servant"—is cultivated, and educated and developed. The positive, *ab extra*, legislation still has its value and office, and its necessity. The early days of the new life are days of childhood, with its ignorance and its weakness. The "law" trains and refines the newly awakened perception of what is sin and what is holiness. It may serve, or be needed, like the stake which supports the sapling, until this rises in established, self-supporting, self-guarding strength. Its "witness" is a defence against the peril of heedlessness or of declining watchfulness; its warning voice may arrest the very beginnings of divergence from the "perfect way." It is needed as an absolute standard, to which the subjective pronouncements may be continually referred for confirmation, for revision, for the illumination of unsuspected error. There is an ever recurrent need that it should be made clear that Obedience and Right are objective, and are obligatory because of the Legislator's will. No most intense love, no most utter trust in Christ, can dispense with the need of holiness in heart and life. If the "Law of Moses" do not now bind, there is a "Law of Christ" (Gal. vi. 2) which does. Indeed, in regard to all the abiding principles which in the old Code appear in local, national, temporary dress, the Christian man is "under the law to Christ" (1 Cor. ix. 21). 3. Against the lawless freedom which is licence and even licentiousness, the Apostle's instinctive recoiling, "God forbid," is argument good enough. For it, "Whose damnation is just," is the unerringly, instinctively, just verdict of the healthy life, rejoicing in the most abundant freedom of the Spirit.

Ver. 17. *The Freedom of the Spirit.*

I. **General statement of this truth.** —The glory of the Old Covenant, symbolised by the glowing face of Moses, was of an inferior order to that of the New. *As a rule of life*, without the Atoning Blood to pardon sin and without the grace of the Spirit to make obedience possible, the Law had been but a ministration of condemnation. *As a typical system*, it had been destined to pass away on the appearance of the Antitype which fulfilled it. The Gospel was, in marked contrast, endowed with perpetuity and was a ministration of spiritual righteousness. Symbolically, and really, the early dispensation was protected from a too searching scrutiny, which might have revealed at the very moment of its introduction a Higher Object beyond itself which was yet to come. Those who are converted to Jesus Christ have escaped from the veil which darkened the spiritual intelligence of Israel. The converting Spirit is the source of positive illumination; but before He thus enlightens, He must give freedom from the veil of prejudice which denies to Jewish thought any real insight into the deeper sense of Scripture. The Christian student of the ancient Law seizes that sense, because he possesses the Spirit, and He gives liberty, and faculty, for inquiry. The specific liberty here is not merely liberty from the yoke of the Law; but liberty from the tyranny of obstacles which cloud the spiritual sight of truth; liberty from spiritual rather than from intellectual dulness; from a state of soul which cannot apprehend truth. The Spirit still gives this liberty. This is the enunciation of a master-feature of the Gospel.

This liberty is the invariable accompaniment of His true action, the very atmosphere of His presence. Nor is the freedom which He sheds abroad a poor reproduction of the restless, volatile, self-asserting, sceptical temper of Pagan Greek life, adapted to the forms and thoughts of modern civilisation, and awkwardly expressing itself in Christian phraseology. He gives liberty in the broad, deep sense of that word. He gives freedom from error for the reason; freedom from constraint for the affections; freedom for the will from the tyranny of sinful and human wills. Human nature has imagined such a freedom, but has sighed in vain for the reality. It is, in fact, a creation; the sons of God alone enjoy it. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, **there** is liberty."

II. **In more of detail.**—1. *Mental liberty.*—God has from the first consecrated liberty of thought. He has so ordered the framework of human social order that society cannot force the sanctuary of our thought. Without our consent society cannot enter within us (1 Cor. ii. 11). So, in the martyrdoms of the first three centuries, the strength of those who to the death bore their witness for not merely moral, but mental liberty, was strength given by the Spirit. Their testimony was His under whose illumination Christians became conscious of a new power, almost a new sense for the supernatural. To-day it is supposed that the Churches and their creeds, their "dogmas," are enemies of religious freedom. To value dogma is invidiously contrasted with setting a value on Christian character and life; as though he who cares for the one must by some necessity neglect the other. The Church of the Future "will dispense with dogma." *In such talk, dogma is assumed, rather than stated in words, to be untrue.* The leaven of Hegelian philosophy is in the current talking and thinking. There is no recognised rule for reason; in human opinion all is true, and yet nothing is true. All truth is partial, limited; all statements of truth are true and false at once. And the like. Further, the prevalence of experimental methods of inquiry leads many minds tacitly to assume that nothing is real, the truth of which cannot be established and tested by [physical] observation. Yet "Dogma" is a neutral, innocent word, suggesting lexically or by its history nothing untrustworthy or discreditable. The philosophers who denounce Christian "dogma" have their own "dogmas," in the true sense, [and are sometimes "dogmatic" enough, in the accidental, evil sense]. "Dogma is essential Christian truth thrown *by authority* [N.B. this] into a form which admits of its permanently passing into the understanding and being treasured by the heart of the people." Accordingly it is found abundantly in the New Testament; 1 Cor. xv. is largely pure dogma. "The Divine Spirit, speaking through the clear utterances of Scripture, *and* [N.B.] *the illuminated and consenting thought of Christendom*, is the real Author of essential dogma." Dogma is a restraint upon thought, only where liberty is mischievous or impossible. He who believes that revealed truths are true should not dislike their being stated dogmatically. To admit the truth of a position of course takes away the liberty to deny it. Every new discovery of ascertained truth takes something from freedom to think otherwise. The freest and most exact science known to the human mind has at its base axioms which cannot be demonstrated, yet cannot be rejected. Euclid begins by demanding a sacrifice of mental liberty. Refuse to submit to, accept, use, these dogmas; a man can go no further, and arrive at nothing. True or false, the dogmas of Christian truth are not discredited by being stated in dogmatic form. Submission to revealed truth [whether at the end of a personal investigation of its claim, or at the bidding of a Church, or in acquiescent following of the custom of a man's circle] does involve some limitation of intellectual licence. The lamps in the streets do trench upon space where the passenger might walk.

In English public and private life the supremacy of law curtails, whilst it gives and protects, personal freedom. "The free intelligence of the Church bows before the language of the Creeds, because that language guards a truth which the faith of the Church recognises as of heavenly origin." Dogma stimulates thought, provokes it, sustains it at an elevation otherwise impossible. Dogma stimulates in its earlier, but petrifies into uselessness in its later, stage. No Christian who seriously believes that Jesus is God, that His Death is a World-redeeming Sacrifice, that the Eternal Spirit sanctifies the redeemed, that Scripture is the inspired Word of God, "that the Sacraments are the appointed channels whereby we partake of the Life of Jesus, can say that in himself these truths have petrified, arrested, stifled thought."

2. *Moral liberty.*—In the kingdom of the Spirit alone is the will free. Naturally we are bound with fetters of habit, passion, prejudice; we hug our chains; even dare to promise men liberty, etc. (2 Pet. ii. 19). There is no such thing as a resurrection from moral slavery, except for the soul which has laid hold on a fixed objective truth. When at the breath of the Divine Spirit upon the soul heaven is opened to the eye of faith, and man looks up from his misery and his weakness to the Everlasting Christ upon His throne; then freedom is possible, for the Son has taken flesh, and died, and risen again, and interceded with the Father, and given us His Spirit "and His Sacraments," expressly that we might enjoy it. "On the condition of submission?" Yes; but in obeying God, a man acquires not only freedom, but royalty, in its highest exercise of empire,—command over himself, a thing he best learns by voluntary submission. Bend the knee to that Christ of Bethlehem and Calvary, listen to the New Commandment as the Charter of freedom,—rise a king and priest to God and the Father! You have free access to the courts of heaven: you serve One Whose service alone is perfect freedom! Liberty of conscience and will is the greatest blessing of all "freedoms." "It is freedom from a sense of sin, when all is known to have been pardoned through the atoning blood; freedom from a slavish fear of our Father in Heaven, when conscience is offered to His unerring Eye morning and evening by that penitent love which fixes its eye upon the Crucified; freedom from current prejudice and false human opinion, when the soul gazes by intuitive faith upon the actual truth; freedom from the depressing yoke of feeble health or narrow circumstances, since the soul cannot be crushed which rests consciously upon the Everlasting Arms; freedom from that haunting fear of death, which holds all who really think upon death 'all their lifetime subject to bondage,' unless they are His true friends and clients, Who by the sharpness of His own death has led the way and 'opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.' It is freedom in time also, and beyond, freedom in eternity. In that blessed world, in the unclouded Presence of the Emancipator, the brand of slavery is inconceivable. In that world there is a perpetual service; yet, since it is the source of love made perfect, it is only and by necessity the service of the free. For '**where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.**'"—*Adapted from Liddon, "University Sermons,"* iv. This last paragraph may itself suggest a Homily.

Ver. 17. *Christian Liberty and the Law.*

I. **The bondage.**—"The condition of believers under the past dispensation . . . is spoken of as a certain species of restraint or bondage,—not the bondage, indeed, of slaves [?], and mercenaries, which belonged only to the carnal as opposed to the believing portion of the Church; but the bondage of those who, though free-born children, are still in nonage, and must be kept under the restraint and discipline of an external law. This, however, could

in no case be the whole of the agency with which the believer was plied, for then his yoke must have been literally the galling bondage of the slave. He *must* have had more or less the Spirit of life within, begetting and prompting him to do the things which the law outwardly enjoined, making the pulse of life in the heart beat in harmony with the rule of life prescribed in the law; so that, while he still felt 'as under tutors and governors,' it was not as one needing to be 'held in with bit and bridle,' but rather as one disposed readily and cheerfully to keep to the appointed course. . . . So it unquestionably was with the Psalmist; . . . the law was not a mere outward yoke, nor in any proper sense a burden: it was 'within their heart,' they delighted in its precepts, and meditated therein day and night: to listen to its instructions was sweeter to them than honey, and to obey its dictates was better than thousands of gold and silver" [Fairbairn, *Typology*, ii. 193, 194. Does this do justice as to Acts xv. 10? He says admirably as to]—

II. **The liberty.**—"When the believer receives Christ as the Lord his righteousness, he is not only justified by grace, but he comes into a state of grace, or gets grace into his heart as a living, reigning, governing principle of life. What, however, is this grace but the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus? And this Spirit is emphatically the Holy Spirit; holiness is the very element of His being, and the essential law of His working; every desire He breathes, every feeling He awakens, every action He disposes and enables us to perform, is according to godliness. And if only we are sufficiently possessed of this Spirit, and yield ourselves to His direction and control, we no longer need the restraint and discipline of the law; *we are free from it*, because we are superior to it. Quickened and led by the Spirit, we of ourselves love and do the things which the law requires. . . ." [As in an adult son] "the *mind* has become his from which the parental law proceeded, and he has consequently become independent of its outward prescriptions. [Strictly this last is only true *in proportion as* he has become possessed of the '*mind.*'] And what is it to be under the grace of God's Spirit but to have *the mind of God*?—the mind of Him who gave the law simply as a revelation of what was in His heart respecting the holiness of His people. So that the more they have of the one, the less, obviously, they need of the other; and *if only they were complete* in the grace of the Spirit, *they would be wholly independent of the bonds* and restrictions *of the law*." (*Ib.*, p. 190.) The law was not made for a good man who stands in a right relation to the law of his country. So "to one who has become a partaker of 'the Spirit of God' the law, considered as an outward discipline placing him under a yoke of manifold commands and prohibitions, has for him ceased to exist. But it has ceased in that respect only by taking possession of him in another" (*Ib.*, p. 191).

[Fairbairn adds (*ib.*, p. 201):—

III. "From the law in its strict and proper sense—the law of the ten commandments—the freedom enjoyed by the Christian is not absolute, but relative only, just as the Israelites' want of the Spirit was relative only. But in regard to what is called the ceremonial law the freedom *is* absolute; and to keep up the observance of its symbolical institutions and services after the new despensation entered was not only to retain a yoke that might be dispensed with, but also an incongruity to be avoided, and even a danger to be shunned. For, viewed simply as *teaching* ordinances . . . they were superseded . . . by the appointment of other means more suitable as instruments *in the hand of the Spirit* for ministering instruction to . . . men. The change then brought into the Divine administration was characterised throughout by *a more immediate and direct handling of the things of God.* They were now things *no longer hid under a veil*, but openly disclosed to the

eye of the mind. Ordinances which were adapted to the state of the Church *when neither was the Spirit fully given*, nor were the things of God [by Him] clearly revealed, could not possibly be . . . adapted to the Church of the New Testament. *The* grand ordinance here must be the free and open manifestation of the truth—written first in the word of inspiration, and thenceforth continually proclaimed anew by the preaching of the Gospel; and such symbolical institutions as might yet be needed must be founded upon the clear revelations of the word—not like those of the former dispensation, spreading a veil over the truth, or affording only a dim shadow of better things to come.' (*Ib.*, p. 201.)]

Ver. 17. *Liberty from Law under the Dispensation of the Spirit.*—The Christian religion as the *Perfect Law of Liberty* finds its perfection in the bestowment *through the Holy Spirit* of an internal *freedom from the restraint of law* which is quite consistent with subjection to external law as a directory of the life.

I. **There is nothing more characteristic of the Christian economy of ethics than that it sets up an internal rule** (Rom. viii. 2).—This interior rule responds to the exterior, and in a certain sense supersedes it. The external law ceases as a law of death; it has vanished with the conscience of sin removed in pardon. And in contrast to the Law which was against and over the soul in its impossibility of fulfilment, the Spirit of life within gives strength for all obedience; and the law to be obeyed is set up within us (Heb. viii. 10). This is more than the restoration of the almost effaced traces of the law engraven on the heart of universal man. . . . This internal law is supernatural; it is nature still, but nature restored and more than restored; a supernatural nature. This is the interior polity of holy government of which St. James speaks (Jas. i. 25); perfect law becomes perfect liberty from external obligation. The nearer obedience is to the uniformity of the ordinances of nature—being conscious and willing obedience, though in its perfection not conscious of its willing—the nearer it approaches the Creator's end. . . . In all the economy of the physical universe His law works from within outwardly, and there is no need of any outward statute to be registered for the guidance of His unintelligent creatures. The Divine Spirit in the heart of the regenerate man seeks to work out in a similar way a perfect obedience to the law of love.

II. **In a loose and general way this may be called the rule of conscience** (Acts xxiv. 13; but this is pre-Christian). . . . We may speak of the internal law as that of Self-government restored. The rule of God's Spirit in the spirit of the regenerate, is the administration of conscience or the renewed self, according to the normal idea of the Creator. Men thus trusted—under authority to that Holy Ghost, yet having their own souls under them—are in the highest and purest sense *a law unto themselves* (Rom. ii. 4). Yet this is only as *under the law to Christ* (1 Cor. ix. 21), Who is the common Lord of all.

III. **For there is still an external law . . . which is continued by reason of the weakness of the new nature.**—1. The external standard still maintains the dignity of law. . . . We are *delivered from the law of sin and death*, not from the law that directs to holiness and life. Written on *the fleshly tables of the heart*, the commandments are deposited also in an ark on *tables of stone* for common appeal amongst probationary mortals. The eternal morals of the old economy have not passed away. They are re-enacted under other forms, and re-written in the pages of the New Testament as [*a*] the Standard of requirement, [*b*] the Condition of the Charter of privileges, and [*c*] a Testimony against those who offend. [A good Homily in germ.] 2. The outward enactments are still the directory of individual duty. . . .

The best Christians need a remembrancer; they obey the law within, but are not always independent of the teaching of the law without. 3. The external is the safeguard of the internal law: against its only or chief enemy, Antinomianism, which regards the law as abolished in Christ, or treats it as if it were so. Theoretical or theological Antinomianism . . . makes a Christian's salvation eternally independent of any other obedience than that of the Gospel offer of grace. . . . There is a teaching which holds that the Substitute of man has not only paid the penalty of human offence, but has fulfilled the law also for the sinner; thus making the salvation of the elect secure. The believer has in this doctrine [call it "Vicarious Holiness"?] no more to do with a legal rule save as a subordinate teacher of morality. He will never to all eternity stand before any bar to be judged by the law. . . . This is the very truth of the Gospel so far as concerns the demand of the law for eternal and unbroken conformity with its precepts, . . . but there is only a step between precious truth and perilous error here. . . . There is also a prevalent practical Antinomianism (Gal. v. 13), sometimes connected with the theoretical renunciation of law. [It is] found in all communities, the disgrace of all creeds and confessions. . . . The written commandments are a safeguard. . . . If Christian people recite their Creed to keep in memory the things they surely believe, not less necessary is it that they should also recite the Commandments to keep in memory what they must do to enter into life.—*Adapted.* See also under 1 Cor. ix. 21.

## *HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.*

Ver. 2. "*Living epistles.*"

I. **What they contain.**—The record of ministerial faithfulness—and success.

II. **Where they are written.**—In the heart, as a testimony of Divine approval, as a certain proof of a Divine call.

III. **By whom they are read.**—By all men—easily with intelligent conviction.—[*J. L.*]

Vers. 4-11. *The Glory of the Christian Ministry.*

I. **Its foundation.**—Trust in God through Christ. Divine sufficiency. Suitable qualifications.

II. **Its function.**—The ministration not of the letter, but of the Spirit.

III. **Its means.**—Not external, that dazzle and then vanish away. But the co-operation of the Holy Ghost.

IV. **Its object.**—Not condemnation and death, but righteousness and life.

V. **Its reward.**—Even now a more excellent glory. Hereafter a glory everlasting.—[*J. L.*]

Or thus:—

*The New Testament Ministry*—

I. Has the vastest resources.

II. Effects the greatest wonders.

III. Secures the most enduring results.—[*J. L.*]

Ver. 8. "*The ministration of the Spirit.*"

I. Deals with "the spirit" in man.

II. Is effectual only when in the power of the Holy Spirit.

III. Has for its great purpose the communication of the Holy Spirit, the characteristic, distinctive glory, and privilege of the Christian dispensation.

Ver. 9. *The Ministration of*—

I. **Condemnation.**—Reveals and enforces law. Convinces of sin. Brings condemnation.

II. **Righteousness.** — Satisfies the law. Teaches faith. Brings pardon and holiness.

III. II. **therefore exceeds** I. **in glory** in that it perfects the work of the latter. Saves the sinner. Secures greater glory to God.—[*J. L.*]

Ver. 18. *Conformity by gazing.*—Foundation and building not identical,

yet related. So Judaism and Christianity. "Judaism contained not the completeness of Christianity; Christianity halted not at the beginnings of Judaism." 1. They *agree*, in *source*, God; in *purpose*, to preserve the knowledge of the true God; in *matter*, a revelation of God's will; Judaism, "coarse," rude; Christianity, a life-inspired system. 2. They *differ*, in their method of revelation, by the Mediator and the Master; in their expositors; in the perpetuity of Christianity. "After Adamism, Noachism; after Noachism, Abrahamism; after Abrahamism, Judaism; after Judaism, Christianity; after Christianity, — *Eternity!*" Judaism limited; Christianity universal. Judaism veiled the light; in Christ the veil is gone. Text shows:—

I. **Religion in its sanctity of nature.**—Its one object is to change man into the image—of whom? Of God? Of Christ? No matter. God inconceivable and unconceived. The study of His works and even of His words alone only introduces man to "a Voice in the dark." All we can know, or need to know, is embodied in Christ. Christ removes the two barriers—man's incapacity, God's invisibility. And Christ did not come to teach Dogma, or merely create a religious "guild," *but to conform man to Himself.* Look at Him in His many-sided, symmetrical, pure spirituality. See Him "crystalline-translucent" in conscience. See His deliberate, undeflected devotedness. His mind, Divine.

II. **Manner of attaining conformity.**—1. "*Beholding.*" Not merely "staring at." There must be the unveiled glass, and the unclosed eye. 2. Once more, neither is the study of His works and words enough. May read the New Testament once a year; may study critically, "with audacious freedom." Men, acute enough, saw His works: their verdict was "Beelzebub," "Blasphemer, enthusiast, traitor." 3. Must bring Christ to study of Christ. May not repudiate His teaching and yet hope to understand Him. 4. This only "*by the Spirit of the Lord*," "taking of the things of Christ," etc. Unveiling the mirror; opening the eye.

III. **Progressive conformity.**—No hurry in God's working. "If a young Christian begin young, the conformity shall fill a life of many years." "Even God cannot create growth."—*Notes of sermon by John Burton, penes H. J. F.*

[On the Old Testament passage underlying ver. 7—iv. 6, particularly "*Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone*," the suggestion may be useful:—]

"*A Picture of True Glory.*" ["*Unconscious Goodness.*"]

I. **Involves fellowship with the Eternal.**—Character is formed on the principle of *imitation.* This process perfected needs: *a perfect model; the love of a perfect model; the knowledge of a perfect model.*

II. **Has an external manifestation.**—Was it not a reflection of the moral glory of his soul, glorified by communion with God? The heart does—notwithstanding the possibility and the fact of successful hypocrisy—stamp itself *upon the face.* Stephen's face. And *upon the language* yet more certainly. *Upon our lives:* "as the man thinketh in his heart so is he." [A pregnant saying, capable of many readings: What he *means*, though he expresses himself badly in word or act, that is the man to be recognised; what his heart's bent and love are, that surely the man becomes; a man will let slip a word, or do instinctively some action, which reveals the evil man of the heart under the plausible mask of the face.]

III. **Is never self-conscious.**—But greatness drowns egotism. The standard of judgment is outside the man's self. He lives amongst a circle of persons and things which forms a true standard of measurement. Christian love, above all, casts out egotism; too eager about others to serve, or even think about, itself.

**IV. Commands the reverence of society.**—Conscience will instinctively respect true, unconscious greatness. Guilt will bow the wrong-doer in homage before it.—*More fully in "Homilist," Third Series*, vi. 343.

## *APPENDED NOTES.*

Chap. iii. *Openness of Apostolical Service.*—The whole argument of this passage is so interwoven with personal allusions, and with illustrations from a particular interpretation of a single passage in the Old Testament, that there is a difficulty in deducing any general truth from it directly. . . . It may be worth while to go through the various images which the Apostle has called up. First, there is the commendatory Epistle of the Corinthian Church, written on his heart. Next, the same Epistle written on their hearts and lives, read and re-read by the wayfarers to and fro, through the thoroughfare of Greece. Thirdly, the contrast between this Epistle, written on the tender human feelings, on the vibrations of the wind, by the breath of the Spirit; carrying its tidings backwards and forwards, whithersoever it will, with no limits of time or space, like the sweep of the wind on the Æolian harp, like an electric spark of light,—and the Ten Commandments graven in the granite blocks of Sinai, hard, speechless, lifeless. Fourthly, there rises into view the figure of Moses, as he is known to us in the statue of Michael Angelo, the light streaming from his face, yet growing dim and dark as a greater glory of another revelation rises behind it. Fifthly, the same figure veiled, as the light beneath the veil dies away and shade rests upon the scene, and there rises around him a multiplication of the figure, the Jews in their synagogues veiled, as the Book of the Law is read before them. Sixthly, the same figure of Moses once more, but now unveiled as he turns again to Mount Sinai and uncovers his face to rekindle its glory in the Divine presence; and now again, this same figure multiplied in the Apostle and the Corinthian congregation following him, all with faces unveiled, and upturned toward the light of Christ's presence, the glory streaming into their faces with greater and greater brightness, as if borne in upon them by the Spirit or breath of light from that Divine countenance, till they are transfigured into a blaze of splendour like unto it.—*Stanley*, pp. 418, 420.

Ver. 11. "*That which remaineth.*"—Christianity is connected with all those religions which have preceded it, and that not merely as one of them, but as their truth, their aim, as simply religion. *Christianity is the absolute religion*—the only true and intrinsically valid religion. Such is the pretension with which it entered the world, and which it constantly maintains. This may be called exclusiveness and intolerance, but it is the intolerance of truth. As soon as truth concedes the possibility of her opposite being also true, she denies herself. As soon as Christianity ceases to declare herself to be the only true religion, she annihilates her power, and denies her right to exist, for she denies her necessity. The old world concluded with the question, What is Truth? The new world began with the saying of Christ, I am the Truth. And this saying is the confession of Christian faith. The form which the Christian faith may assume may alter; the human notions by which it seeks to express itself may change; but Christian faith must declare itself to be the unchangeable truth. It must affirm that this truth is the answer to the old questions of human nature, and that all the religions which have been its predecessors were mostly preliminary and preparatory, and have found in it their aim and goal. Heathenism was the seeking religion, Judaism the hoping religion; Christianity is the reality of what heathenism sought, and Judaism hoped for.—*Luthardt*, "*Saving Truths*," p. 20. He adds in notes:—

"Christianity is the religion which, in the person of its Founder, actually realises that union of man with God which every other religion has striven after, but none attained; and from this creative centre, by doctrine and moral influence, by redemption and reconciliation, restores the individual and the human race to their true destiny, to that true communion, to that mind with God in which all that is human is sanctified and glorified." (Ullmann.)

"If we consider the different religions with respect to this fundamental problem [of the bringing together Creator and creature, Holy God and sinful man], we may say that heathenism knows not the problem; that Israel is living in the problem, and awaiting its solution; but that Christianity alone furnishes the solution, through its Gospel of the Incarnation of God [and the Atonement of the Cross]. (Martensen, *Dogmatik.*)

# CHAPTER IV.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

Ver. 1. **This ministry.**—Viz. that in iii. 3, 6, 7, 8, 9; and more definitely expounded at the end of this long section, in v. 18, 19, vi. 3, 4. **Therefore.**—Looks back to the substance of chap. iii., and returns, with a new phase of connection, to iii. 4, 12. Yet, again a half-parenthetical passage intervenes before "we *faint not*" is expanded in ver. 7 *sqq*. Note the comma in the R.V. after "*mercy*." See the "*mercy*" and the "*ministry*" closely connected in 1 Tim. i. 12, 13, with the same link of thought as here. **Faint.**—Word peculiar to Paul and his friend Luke, in the New Testament. "Flag, 'give out.'"

Ver. 2.—*Hidden things* (of which it is) *shame* (to speak or to be guilty). Yet hardly so much as is suggested in Eph. v. 12. Underhand, insincere, double-minded motives, such as he was accused of. No "*veil*" on his conduct at all events; cf. "*manifest*," v. 10, 11. No "*veil*" upon "*the truth*," as he "*ministers*" it. **Handling deceitfully.**—Same thought as ii. 17. **Commending ourselves.**—True reply to iii. 1.

Ver. 3.—"*Hid*" is "veiled," *q.d.* if there be a *veil* it is as with Moses and Israel, rather upon "the *hearts*" of readers and hearers than upon the minister, or than upon the Law or Gospel themselves. Note "*are perishing*" (R.V.); ii. 16.

Ver. 4. **The god of this world.**—Not "Rabbinical" teaching, but absolute truth of the revealing Holy Ghost. Christ leads the way with His most definite "*prince of this world*" (John xii. 31, xiv. 30). Paul follows in Eph. ii. 2, "the *prince of the power of the air*," etc. (vi. 12). "*World*" is "age"; "*minds*" may be "thoughts." [These are "*blinded*" here; "*hardened*" in iii. 14.] **Shine.**—"*Dawn*" (R.V.). Note, specially, this word is cognate with "the *brightness* of His glory" (Heb. i. 3). Also note the fuller, and exact, and significant "*Gospel of the glory of Christ*." [So again, and close to the "*ministry*" and "*mercy*" combination, we have the "*Gospel of the glory*" in 1 Tim. i. 11.]

Ver. 5. "**Lord.**"—R.V., with most moderns, makes this a predicate: "*We preach Him as Lord*." In that case, obviously, it could not be appended also to the parallel "*ourselves*"; unless in reply to the charge of i. 24 (cognate word), "we do not propose [proclaim] ourselves to you as masters, but Him as the only Master; ourselves only your *slaves* [not διάκονοι as throughout chap. iii., in relation to God and the Gospel]; indeed, we do not commend ourselves to your notice or acceptance at all, but Him." Note the *variant reading* "*through Jesus*."

Ver. 6.—Gen. i. 3 is directly quoted (so R.V.). Note how he again contrasts the things of "*shame*" and this awakening to the "*light*" in Eph. v. 11-14.

Ver. 7.—Gold, in a common jar of earthenware. **Excellency** is "*exceeding greatness of the power*." Similar in cognate language, and in thought, to Eph. i. 19.

Ver. 8.—"Pressed for room, and still having room" (Stanley). "Perplexed, but not utterly perplexed" (Beet). Apparent, not real, contradiction to i. 8 (same word).

Ver. 9.—"Pursued in our flight, but not left behind as a prey to our pursuers; struck down (as with a dart, or thrown down as in wrestling), yet not perishing" (Stanley).

Ver. 10. **Dying.**—Note R.V. margin. See under i. 5 for the thought.

Ver. 11. **Live.**—In *more than the physical sense.* See, a few months later, first clause of this verse exemplified at Corinth (Acts xx. 3).

Ver. 12.—Might almost personify, and write "Death," "Life." "The preachers daily felt themselves sinking into the grave [query, rather being led by a Via Dolorosa to a cross on a Calvary]; and their daily deliverance was daily working eternal life among their converts" (Beet). The thoughts recur in 1 Cor. iv. 8-10 and Phil. i. 19.

Ver. 13.—"The **same** (Holy) **Spirit** of faith" as is implied in the thought of Ps. cxvi. 10, LXX. [Perowne says this is an impossible rendering of the Hebrew. He submits (1) "I believe when I speak," *i.e.* when I break forth into the complaint which follows in the next clause; but he prefers (2) "I believe"—emphatic, *i.e.* I do believe, I have been taught trust in God by painful experience—"for I must speak"—I must confess it, "I, even I (pronoun emphatic), was greatly afflicted; I myself," etc. "The Psalmist declares that he *stays himself* upon God ('I believe'), for he had looked to himself and there had seen nothing but weakness; he had looked to other men, and found them all deceitful, treacherous as a broken reed."] Is there anything more intended than a "happy quotation" of a familiar phrase, quite apart from its correctness as representing the Hebrew? Nothing depends on that correctness, though in some phrases of the context in the Psalm there is an appropriateness to Paul's peril and deliverance. As it stands in the LXX., the phrase happily expresses a very great principle.

Ver. 14. **With Jesus.**—Not "*by*," or, as often, "*in*," but exactly "*along with*," as 1 Thess. iv. 14. More than "sharing His condition" (Stanley). More truly Beet says: "Since our resurrection is a result of Christ's resurrection, wrought by the same power, in consequence of our present spiritual union with Christ, and is part of that heritage which we share with Christ, Paul overlooks the separation in time, and thinks of his own resurrection and Christ's as one Divine act."

Ver. 15. **All** (these) **things.**—"If I live such a life, it is in order that there may be more souls partaking of the grace, and then the more to thank God for it." Similar to i. 11 and ix. 12-14.

Ver. 16. **The inward man.**—Same original as "*the inner man*" in Eph. iii. 16, or Rom. vii. 22; but hardly in the same sense; the moral aspect is there prominent, here only the immaterial character of it. So "*renewed*" is not prominently the moral renewal of Col. iii. 10.

Ver. 17.—Note the R.V. **While.**—"If we cease to *look*, it ceases to *work*." This verse helps to fix exegetically the meaning of "*eternal*." If Restoration were a certainty in the ultimate future for the lost, they might in hell quote vers. 17, 18. Dean Plumptre wrote to Archdeacon Farrar: "I have never been able to attach any great importance to the discussions which have turned upon the meaning of the word *αἰώνιος*. I cannot, on philological grounds, agree with Mr. Maurice in thinking that our Lord's teaching in John xvii. 3 excludes from it the idea of duration, and the whole history of the word shows that it cannot of itself denote, though it may suggest, the idea of endlessness." [*Spirits in Prison*, p. 338. He repeats all this expressly, p. 336 (in an essay *ad hoc*).]

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 1—7.

[Section continued from chap. iii.]

III. **An open [unveiled] Gospel.**—1. *Observe the phrase*, "*Gospel.*" (1) In regard to the Old Order, and to the New alike, Paul's phraseology is noteworthy; in its variety of designations for each, and in their practical interchangeableness. Not that the various designations are used at haphazard or for the mere sake of an assonance. There is a propriety in the particular phrase used in each case; yet in use one readily passes over into another. (2) There is a strangely modern sound about the words, "*The reading of the old testament.*" It would be going too fast for the development of Paul's thought and God's revealing order to print, "The reading of the Old Testament"; yet such a meaning is coming fast into view; a distinct, complete Book, or Literature, which may be called—from its main subject and contents—"The Old Testament." As yet, however, the Subject—the Old Covenant—is to the forefront in Paul's mind. To "*minister the old testament*" and to "*minister the new testament*" [not yet "New Testament"] are to "*minister condemnation*" and to "*minister righteousness*" respectively; these are the issues of the two testaments in their effect upon those who come into testing, decisive relation with them. The characteristic "note" of the one is that it is "*a letter*," external, exact, unalterable, formulated into a definite code of rules; of the other, that it is internal to the man, governing not by rules, but by principles; not with the rigidity of half-mechanical, external regulation and control, but the elasticity and freedom of Life within; unfettered, yet not irregular or morally abnormal, because the Life and the Liberty are those of the indwelling Spirit of God. (3) So here. Moses brought down a Law from Sinai; Paul and his brethren have received "*a Gospel.*" This is described more fully as "*the Gospel of the glory of Christ.*" He is its great Subject; His glory in it puts glory upon it. Yet the Gospel which reveals Him reveals Him as Himself a Revealer of God and of His glory. By the help of "*the Gospel*" we know Christ, and, yet more, we come to know "*God's glory.*" And, further, this Gospel of the knowledge of the glory of God is "*the truth.*" Then is it good tidings to know the truth about God and His glory? It is, seeing that that knowledge comes to men through Christ as its medium. To come into direct contact with the "bare," unveiled glory of God were death to sinners. Israel saw the glory of God on

the face of Moses, absorbed, reflected; we see "*the glory of God* **in** *the face of Jesus Christ*," inherent, but, as it were, shining **through** the humanity.

2. *The contents of the Gospel.*—(1) Perfectly true as a "working" statement, that the Gospel reveals the way of salvation, "God's righteousness" for sinners. But the better, larger, truer, whole, view, is that *it reveals God.* As a redeeming God, for the race; as a pardoning God, for the penitent sinner. "Have faith *in God*" is, in the deepest analysis, the true formula for saving faith. "Faith *in Christ*" is the shape which it naturally and serviceably assumes in the evangelistic work of the Church, and in which it offers itself to the sinner's most easy apprehension. But underneath the faith in Christ is a faith in God. Christ is the object of faith, truly; but in laying hold of Him the sinner lays hold of God's promise of a mercy which is by express proclamation attached to the act of believing in Him. Christ is God's Word—of promise; He is a Promise incarnate; faith which takes hold of Christ, takes hold of God, Who in Christ has expressed Himself and His will and heart. (2) God reveals *Himself*, as well as His will and heart, in the Gospel. We have seen "*God in the face of Jesus Christ.*" In homely phrase, He is the Father "over again." Whatsoever things the Father doeth [and saith] those things doeth [and saith] the Son likewise [ = in similar manner], John v. 19. We *hear of* God from Christ; we also *hear* God in the words of Christ. The manner and the principles of the works of God are seen in those of Christ, *e.g.* such as belong to the matter here in hand. The Son pardons the sins of (say) the paralytic (Mark ii.) because the Father pardons sin; the act of Christ is intended to reveal to men a God Who pardons. Study Christ pardoning sin, and see how God pardons sin. The faith *of the friends* of the paralytic ["*their* faith," the man being, no doubt, included] is closely connected with the word of Christ, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." There is then an efficiency about faith which brings *others* to God for pardon. The paralytic comes to Christ and finds forgiveness; then men may come to God and find forgiveness. He goes out from the presence of Christ, knowing that his sin is forgiven. Then men may go forth from the presence of God also, knowing that sin is forgiven. Every miracle of Christ is more than an act of benevolence toward suffering or sorrow or need; it is this, but also, and still more, a carefully chosen, deliberately done [and with special authenticity recorded] part of Christ's whole revelation of God. Works, words, character, motives, principles underlying and governing acts and words,—in them all, as we study them in Christ, we see God. (3) And this is a revelation of the "**glory** *of God.*" The only "*glory*" belonging to Him which sinners could bear to see. The one "*glory*" which they need to see. To a sinner the revelation [as to Moses (Exod. xxxiii. 18, 19)] of the "goodness," specially as "showing mercy, pardoning iniquity," etc., is the revelation of God's truest "glory" to such as he. The heart which "*turns to the Lord*" Christ, goes into a sanctuary where it gazes upon a real glory of God. The written Gospel is such a sanctuary. Not every foot treads its floor, even of those who diligently read the evangelical narratives, or even write upon their sacred Topic. In reading this revelation of God, "we have our access, our introduction, unto the Father, through Christ, by the Spirit" (cf. Eph. ii. 22).

3. *The veiling of the Gospel.*—(1) *Not by its ministers.* They "*manifest the truth.*" (*a*) They do not obtrude themselves, but "*preach Christ Jesus as Lord.*" To do otherwise—as perhaps Paul's rivals at Corinth [or in Galatia] did—would be a most effectual veiling of the Gospel. They would be lamps calling attention to, and arresting it at, their own form and pattern and beauty, instead of to the light which it is their business to exhibit. The perfect lamp *lets the light shine*, whilst itself inviting the least attention possible. The ministry is for the sake of the light, and for the sake of those on whom it needs to

be shed. "Ourselves your servants." And yet with no slavish subserviency; not as mere creatures of those to whom they bring the illuminating Gospel. "Yours, as being first Christ's; your servants, as, in so serving you, fulfilling our service to Him and bringing glory to Him. Yours for Jesus' sake." The personality of the man is a valuable element in every successful ministry; it must needs stamp itself upon every real man's "*manifestation of the truth.*" [The burner will give shape and size to the gas-flame, but it must not affect the *quality* of the light.] But the moment the ministry becomes an end, and not a means; the man a stopping-point, and not a point of "new departure," and of assistance, to help men on their way to the knowledge of God in Christ; the minister then becomes a "*veil*" to the Gospel. (Yet he is himself only a sinner who has "*obtained mercy*"; the *personal* mercy of acceptance with God, and the *official* mercy which has made even him a "minister.") Moses and his system had thus become a veil instead of a medium; as a popular man or a Church system may come to intervene between the soul and God. "Cannot see God, or hear the Gospel, for the Man." Only One may thus interpose Himself; Jesus Christ may, did, preach *Himself.* "I am the Way," and not a hindrance on the way to God, and to the knowledge of Him and to the vision of His "glory" of grace. (*b*) *They use no veil of reserve*, or insincerity, or crafty handling of the Word, in their acts or teaching. Have "*renounced*" all this, for the Gospel may very effectually in that way be "*veiled.*" There is no *arrière pensée* about their proclamation. They have no selfish ends to serve, in the way they teach it. There is no dishonest suppression of any part of the whole Gospel, from a fear that the whole truth might be awkward for a theological system or an ecclesiastical theory. Truth may be made falsehood, not only by positive additions of alleged "truth,"—perhaps by development, but by omitting complementary truth, or by giving exaggerated prominence to what needs balancing by other aspects of the whole Divine revelation. And if this were done *for the sake of* courting a reputation for being "progressive"; or of shunning the reproach of being a "fossil," or "retrograde," or "obscurantist"; or, more unworthily, *for the sake of* avoiding "the offence of the Cross," or of winning the good word of the unchanged heart; it would be a real, terrible "*veiling*" of "*the Gospel*" and of its "*truth.*" [A wise ministry, of course, practises a (perfectly honest) "economy" of teaching. The babes must have milk. They do not need more. But this not akin to the (technical) "Reserve." True and false "development" have been thus discussed: "There is a modern Romish 'Theory of Development' of which Newman's celebrated essay is the classical exposition, and there is a rationalistic theory which is an application of the hypothesis of evolution to the religious ideas of man. According to the former, the process of development is the expansion, under an infallible directing authority, of doctrinal germs and ideas into a variety of new forms and aspects, 'and the existing belief of the Roman Communion is its mature result.' According to the other theory, all religious conceptions have their origin in the human mind, and Christian doctrine is but one branch of its general progress, the Scriptures themselves, and all belief arising from them, being the natural outgrowth and product of the mind acted upon by surrounding conditions. These opposing theories have much in common, and this among the rest—that truth is not made the test of dogma. In the one case authority is the sole criterion; in the other there is strictly speaking no criterion at all, seeing that, from the rationalistic point of view, dogma can possess no other kind of truth than a temporary and relative adaptation to the religious consciousness from which it springs. Between these . . . there is room for a theory of doctrinal development . . . distinguished by the following 'notes.' *First*, development does not consist in additions to the Revelation contained in Holy Scripture; . . . it does not call

new doctrines into existence [above all, to support or complete any dogmatic system or Church claim]. *Second*, it is development, not of doctrine in its subject-matter, but in the understanding and apprehension of the Church. *Third*, neither for the process nor for the results . . . is infallibility claimed, or anything beyond the general guidance and blessing [of the Church's great Head], . . . which . . . does not preclude the possibility of error in His people." (F. W. Macdonald.) The personal character of the ministry, too, as well as all their dealings with their fellows, show that they have "*renounced*," etc. No denser "*veil*" to the Gospel than a questionable or damaged reputation in its ministers, in regard to their transparent honesty of speech, their simple directness of motive, their entirely "above-board" action. Many seekers after God and after truth have failed to find both, even in the Gospel, as they have read it or have heard it preached, by reason of the known ill-repute of the minister. If the idolised minister, or system, may become a veil, the discredited or discreditable, man, or system may as certainly be so. The ministers need to be *thoroughly transparent* in life and character and teaching. (*c*) *The true ministry has but one aim*,—so to let "*the light shine*" upon the path, and into the mind and heart, of the "*lost*," as that they may best be brought out of their darkness and into the presence of "*the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*" It originally "*shone out of darkness.*" The primal fact of the material creation was repeated in the moral. It was the ray of the dawn of a day, ever since shining more and more unto its perfection of noontide light. That dawn sprang forth from the bosom of darkness, flashing into a world dark in ignorance. Now the Sun Himself was arisen. His light had shone into the darkness of the "*heart*" (and intellect and life) of Paul and his fellow-workers; into and "*in*," for it was an *abiding* day within them. Now they have but one simple, open, unveiled purpose, open to the scrutiny of men and of God—to "*manifest the truth*," all unveiled, to every dark mind and heart which could be induced to gaze. They know of no "*handling the Word of God*" but such as will contribute *to this end.*

(2) *Not by its Divine Author.*—He is the God who loves to "*make light shine out of*," and upon, "*darkness.*" A God of light; a God Who is light; Whose attitude is, "If . . . not so, I would have told you"; Who loves to reveal, rather than to conceal. Silent, He has spoken by His Word; invisible, He has shown Himself in His Image. God is working in and with the soul which craves to see the light.

(3) *By the hearers themselves.*—(*a*) The "*open*" Gospel needs to be met by "*open*" thoughts and hearts. The "spiritual man" is in thorough *rapport* with the "spiritual" minister. ["He that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us" (1 John iv. 6; where note also the following sentence. A noteworthy claim!) A true minister may borrow the words of a Higher Teacher: "My sheep know My voice; . . . they know not the voice of strangers."] The conscience in man leaps [like the unborn Baptist at the approach of the unborn Christ] in response to the truth. Even in the unsaved there is so much of grace that they know, and, at least secretly, honour, even if they do not love, the man who plainly speaks truth. Even in such conscience has from the beginning some power to recognise the truth when it meets with it. It is an eye made for the light. "It is a pleasant thing for this eye to behold this Sun." The sincere Nathanael is ready to welcome and follow new light. Much more does the enlightened man respond to, and go out towards, the man whose truth commends him to his conscience. The man who is in Christ, and even the sincere inquirer for Christ, knows a true minister of Christ when he meets him and hears him; for him that minister carries letters of "*commendation*" of unimpeachable, unquestionable validity. The true minister "*commends himself*" to such. He blamelessly asks their endorsement

of his credentials, and their acceptance of himself and his message. He must conciliate the unsaved man if he is to do him good. If he cannot gain his ear, he will not make the light reach his dark "mind." He appeals thus with hope of success; the "*conscience*" in "*every man*" is the preacher's hope; it is the starting-point of his work. Were it originally absent; let it be blinded or killed; the minister of the Gospel has then nothing to appeal to; "he cometh and hath nothing in" the man. (*b*) It is actually met with "*veiled*" minds. The "*veiled*" heart in the Israelite made the Law a veil, and not a mirror or a medium; the "*veiled*" mind of "*the world*," puts a veil upon the Gospel. Nothing more sadly wonderful to the man who sees, than to find how utterly unable to see what is so clear to him, are the "*lost*" men and women about him. Nothing, unless it be that himself once did not see what is now so plain. There may be many causes of blindness. *Prejudice*, whether induced by early educational bias, or—more than a man is always conscious—by *subtle love of sin* and dislike of holiness. ["Men *love* darkness rather than light" (John iii. 19 *sqq.*).] Moral *indolence*, which will not "be bothered" about such things, and turns away, with an indifference that is as weary as it is worldly, from The Truth [Pilate-like, John xviii. 38]; an indolence which has an uncomfortable misgiving that to listen might involve inquiry, and inquiry compel to action, and that in a direction in which the heart has no desire to look or go. *Preoccupation;* for the mind and heart need to be kept free from entanglement; too eager, too close, contact with any secular pursuit becomes an entanglement, a bondage, a "*veil*" to the heart; art, music, business, home, may swallow up a man until he has neither leisure nor desire for "*the light.*" [The value of the Sabbath to even the "*lost*," and to the young, consists not a little in this, that it is a "break" in the engrossing, enslaving round of secular life, enslaving even its noblest types and forms. The Sabbath does something towards preventing the "*veil*" from becoming too densely impervious to the light.] *Idolatry*, in its many modern forms; *sensuality*, and in its varying degrees even the *sensuous*; any *sinful habit* indulged; *mental pride*, which cannot brook "backing down" from a position once openly taken up; *worldliness* of life and temper, in its widest sense,—all veil the mind and heart. The "man in Christ" sees Christ in Law and Gospel; he understands, too, why the man who is "*lost*" does not, cannot. And to the man living under the gracious influences of the Spirit of God, there is not infrequently given a revelation—from which he shrinks in horror—of the nearness of a Power of Evil,—a very "*god of this world.*" That evil Power is behind, and in, all the veiling of the heart, as the good Spirit is analogously behind, and in, all opening of the eyes and all clearness of disclosure and vision. In neither case is man's personal responsibility destroyed. The veiling is man's own doing, whilst it is also the work of the great Anti-God, "*the god of this world.*"

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 7—18.

**I. The outer life of an apostle** (vers. 7-12). 1. A distressed life; 2. A vicarious life.

**II. The inner life of an apostle** (vers. 13-18). 3. A believing life; 4. A victorious life.

*Who is in the "succession"?*

I. 1. *Distressed.*—(1) Not an unmixed good to get too vivid or realistic a view of the externals of the earthly life of Jesus. [See Homily, "Knowing Christ after the flesh" (2 Cor. v. 16).] It is a great, and unmixed, good to realise the externals of Paul's life. "*Troubled*," "*perplexed*," "*persecuted*," "*cast down*," to a reader's heart, and for the purposes of his practical encouragement, gain

very helpful force, if from (say) the Acts, read with such instructive side-lights as in vi. 3-10, these words be filled out by the realising imagination. "*Persecuted*," *e.g.*, falls lightly from the lips of a reader, and only lightly impresses the attention of the hearers. But it should be remembered how from the day of his conversion Paul was the object of persistent, deep, malicious, murderous hatred, which never relaxed its *pursuit* until his head fell beneath the sword of the executioner, somewhere on the Appian Way. [It was really Jewish persecution which led to his journey "on appeal" to Rome; the influence of Poppæa, the wife of Nero, and a Jewish proselyte, was possibly one of the factors which made his imprisonment to end in death.] Hunted out from city to city. Not safe for long together anywhere. "Smuggled out" of Damascus by night; hurried secretly away from Thessalonica [to Athens (Acts xvii. 14)]; stoning attempted (Acts xiv. 5) or actually accomplished (*ib.* 19); and the examples in the Acts are only the cases which "happen" to be mentioned, out of an unrecorded mass of facts illustrative of this word. [Just before this time (Acts xix. 31); a little after it (xx. 3).] He was the fox hunted from hole to hole; the bird of the air not suffered to shelter long in even a temporary nest. Very graphic (see Critical Notes) are the other words. "*Troubled*" ["*tribulated;*" it is, radically, the word so frequent in chap. i.] "in everything," "at all points," perpetually under the threshing-drag; within him, as well as around him, were the instruments, or the occasions of, perpetual, crushing pressure. [One thinks of the martyrdoms by crushing between boards or plates of iron, under heavy weights. There are daily martyrdoms, not suffered just once, for a short, sharp hour or two of agony, and then done with, but prolonged through a lifetime of distress. See the crowding, pushing, pressing, choking cares of his life graphically illustrated, Luke viii. 45 (cognate word), as also in Mark v. 24, 31.] To the very limit of endurance. ["Patience" in its New Testament sense of "pressing on, *bearing up*," is the counterpart of this "pressure."] "*Perplexed.*" "What next? Where next? Hemmed in; where is the way of escape? At our wits' end; what is the wise and right thing to do? Is there anything that *can* be done?" And this when something "*must*" be done; for time is slipping on, circumstances are closing in around, the last door of escape will soon be closed up. Yet what to do? To see advancing trouble or disaster draw nearer and nearer, yet to stand hanging down helpless hands. "*Cast down;*" thrown in the wrestle, struck down in the conflict [as Christian by Apollyon in the Valley of Humiliation]; lifted, in the strong grip of circumstances or of the Tempter himself, "clean off" one's feet, off one's foothold on the promises and faithfulness of God; blow following on blow, buffet raised on buffet in quick succession; "facts" arising in fertile crop, which seem to "compel" doubts and questions that it is an agony to be obliged to entertain, even though only that they may be dismissed; until all strength to fight on, or even to follow on, seems lost. Reason, trust, hope, sinking, "stricken down" by the quick succession of staggering "facts," in even the providential path; or of disheartening circumstances in the work of God. Every reader adapts to his own special circumstances the words of Paul; they are a frame which will hold many a picture of a distressed life. It is as much his personal, as his official, life which is in question. [(2) In it we meet the time-old, world-wide fact, and the problem which is at its heart,—how scant a recognition the greatest men of their time get; how often the truest benefactors are unrecognised; how often, indeed, goodness, and the holiest life, are only recognised to be met with rebuff, to be made to suffer; how they are persecuted even to the death. This alone is, of course, no complete or adequate account of the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth, but, at the least, it is an account which falls in with and exemplifies this "law." If God's people do not really serve Him "for nought," at least they do not serve Him for what the earthly life has to give.

[Some lives only show their full beauty when "distressed." The incense only gives out its full savour when cast upon the burning coals.] What is the *rationale* of persecution? For no man ever seriously entertained the thought of changing opinion by external, or physical, compulsion. There has been an element of political, governmental action in much persecution of Christianity. In the Roman Empire *religiones illicitæ* were always obnoxious to the State. The necessary, regulative effect of Christianity upon the action and conduct of its professors has sometimes inevitably involved disobedience to some State legislation, and very much oftener a disconformity to the informal, social, customary legislation of the world in which they were citizens. To any form of absolute government, individualism, particularly such as seems aggressive and in conflict with the established order, is a thing to be repressed, if it cannot be destroyed. But this by no means accounts for all persecution, even organised and quasi-governmental. It by no means explains the elaborated ingenuity of cruelty in punishment which is no necessary accompaniment of (even mistaken) justice. It by no means explains the elaborately ingenious and the subtly invented pain inflicted, in cases of personal, as distinguished from quasi-official, persecution. One sentence of Paul is a summary formula for the answer to the question proposed. "As then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now" (Gal. iv. 29). John traces the matter further back. In the Book of Origins—Genesis—he sees in the slaying of Abel by Cain his brother the origin and first example of the deep, innate, inevitable, murderous antipathy between "the world" and "the children of God" (1 John iii. 12). The Roman State persecuted the Church; the heathen state in Madagascar persecuted the Christian community; the Romish Church persecuted its fellow-Christian Albigenses and Vaudois; the Greek Church persecutes its fellow-Christians and fellow-subjects, the Stundists; Episcopal Church government persecuted Presbyterian, or Quaker, or Methodist nonconformity; in the same congregation, the lax—"worldly"—section if in the majority, will give practical, painful, penal effect to its dislike of the spiritual minority; in the same household, "the world" pursues "the Church" with its effective, pain-dealing dislike. It is, in fact, the same "world" everywhere, though it may be a baptized "world" called a Church or a section of one, hating "the spiritual"; it is the same "natural" heart everywhere, which cannot simply be indifferent to, and leave alone, "the spiritual," the pure, the holy, the Divine. The mere contrast is exasperating; it arouses antagonism; the antagonism becomes active. And, finally, the deep underlying "animal" or "devil," of which there is too much in every natural heart, may make its persecution the occasion to display its love of inflicting and witnessing pain. In much persecution there has been seen that "streak" of the cruel, of the savage, which is a possibility of universal human nature, apart from the grace of God.]

2. *Vicarious.* "*All things are for your sakes.*"—(1) *Living for others.* Except *this* corn of wheat had fallen into the ground and died, it would have abode *alone.* Paul must be killed daily, so that Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippian gaolers, Lystran Timothys (Acts xiv. 5, 19, xvi. 1, 2; 2 Tim. iii. 11; *ib.* i. 8, 12, ii. 1, 2, iii. 12, ii. 11-13; a **Bible-reading** in germ), may have life. "Through death to life" is the "law" for a man's own life. If a man will live for himself, introverting upon himself all thought and action—"will save his life" for himself—he will "lose it" and die. [There is no life that can more utterly be selfishness and death than that of self-culture.] "Through the death of one to the life of others" is the "law" for the life of all. Christ's death the highest exemplification of this, though it is unique *qua* the link of connection between His death and our life; there is no analogy in this between the solitary case of Christ and the common cases of ordinary mankind, though both may be stated in terms of the same great

"law." "*For your sakes.*" Not for Paul's own? Certainly. They no doubt had a sanctifying and sanctified efficacy in the training and development of his own Christian life. [Below, they are seen, at the least, "dissolving the tabernacle," and "working out the exceeding weight of glory" for him.] But in the fulness of his Christlikeness of affection, he for the moment sees this no longer; it disappears out of all reckoning. He approximates very closely to Him Who could alone say with full and exact truth, "*All things are for your sakes.*" [On lower planes of illustration are seen instances of the same "law" at work. Some must sacrifice the sorely needed rest of the Sabbath, that others may hear the Gospel and find "life" on the Sabbath. Any life which is to be a blessing and a comfort and a joy in a family, must be continually putting aside its own work or plans or ease, giving itself up to others, and indeed, in its highest types, be "laying itself out" with loving ingenuity, to contrive the pleasure or the convenience of others. Birth, in many ways, and in many instances, means death to the giver of the new life. No man permanently blesses his race with even new thought, except by sore pangs of mental "labour." Etc.] "*For your sake.*" So that in two directions Paul's life is the very opposite of *self*-centered; *Christ*ward—"to me to live is '**Christ**'"; *man*ward—"all for your sakes" [cf. "beside ourselves . . . to God; sober . . . for your cause" (v. 13)]. Poised between, pointing toward, these two poles, the Paul who hangs central between them is forgotten! (2) Especially, **suffering** *for others.* So, probably, ver. 12. The daily "dying" is the price—by him thankfully paid—for their daily "life." (To extend Alford's remark:) God shows death in the living *in order that* he may through them awaken and show life in the dying. Yet, as if an instinctive perception, that vicarious dying in its fullest sense was the propriety of Christ alone, guarded his language, where it trod on the very precipice-edge of error, he never says, "We die for you, or for your sakes." Only this: "*We are delivered daily unto death* **for Jesus' sake.**" [Farrar does indeed paraphrase: "So then death is working in us—seeing that for Christ's sake and for your sakes we die daily—but life in you. The trials are mainly ours; the blessings yours."] [The "vicarious" idea (in an inexact sense of the word) is suggested in vers. 5, 6, 7. The Gospellers have themselves been illumined, as from a central fount of Light, that so in their turn they may show light to, and shed light upon, other dark hearts. They are filled—earthen vessels though they be—with treasure, in order that they may "make many rich." Or as some see the picture in the words, they are the soldiers of a greater captain than Gideon, carrying each of them his light in his earthen pitcher. But "earthen" then conveys no thought of disparity between means used and ends accomplished, between contents and vessel; yet such a disparity seems required by the concluding clause of ver. 7.]

II. 3. *Believing.*—(1) With the same faith, begotten of "*the same Spirit of faith,*" which prompted, and breathes in, the declaration of the Psalmist. The whole drift of Heb. xi. is to exhibit this real unity of the principle of faith, through all the ages and dispensations. Believers are all of a pattern; they conform to a distinctly marked and permanent type, to whatever Church they belong, in whatever age they live, how much or how little soever of light they have upon the matters for which they exercise faith, and upon Him Who, to them all, is the Object towards which faith directs itself, and on which, having reached It, faith rests. It may have the distinctly Gospel colouring and character, but that is rather gained from the matter with which it is concerned. Concerned with "providential" things, or with distinctly "evangelical," faith's hand is in either case "subdued unto the colour" of the thing it works upon, but it is the same hand, and the same grasp upon the same God. [Indeed, it is specially noteworthy how, *e.g.*, the faith of Noah is declared to have won for him a grace which is described in a very "Pauline" phrase,

"Became heir of the *righteousness which is of God by faith.*" And so in other instances. The examples of Heb. xi. are in the closest connection with the critical points of the developing history of Redemption,—the "nodes" in the growing stem, at which miracles (and prophecy) and faith all blossom in fullest profusion.] Old Testament psalmist, New Testament apostle, both belong to the same "set"; [they are of the true Abrahamic stock;] they are "believers." In every age, and in every sense, does God's "just man live by faith." In every age, in every believer, faith's activity conforms to the general formula of Heb. xi. 1; it makes things hoped for and future to be working realities, assumed, taken for granted, in all reckoning and action in the present; it makes things unseen into elements and factors in the daily life, as powerful and as real as the things seen. [So ver. 18.] Indeed, God and His word of faithful promise are more certainly assured conditions of life's problem, than are man and his character or words. [*E.g.* the purpose and the protection of God are more potent considerations than is the wrath of Pharoah (Heb. xi. 27).] "Begotten of *the same Spirit.*" Exegesis, and the whole strain of Scripture, growing clearer as the Pentecostal age advances, require the "S." Faith is not natural to the human heart; it is induced; it is the Spirit's grace. No better, surer proof of this than the fluctuations in its strength, of which every believer is conscious. So unreasonable are they; and yet so little amenable to, or to be put away by, reasoning. After all the experiment of a long lifetime, with its resulting, accumulated "experience," what more logical than "hope"? (Rom. v. 4). What more reasonable, and right, than that the One Friend Who has never failed His people in any slightest particular; Whose resources of wisdom and power, and Whose love and character, have, absolutely without exception, always responded adequately to every demand made upon them by man's need and faith; should be met with a perfectly restful trust? And yet, no! After years of accumulated experience; in the very presence of a great deliverance; with the very greatest mercy only a recent memory; still the heart, ungratefully, illogically, will doubt and be distressed, as if it were only beginning to learn the lesson of faith, instead of being already a lifelong pupil. Faith is a gift, a grace, to be used and cultivated by man, but needing to be created by God's Spirit. Whatever "grieves the Spirit" weakens faith. (2) *The immediate object of Paul's faith is the resurrection of Jesus Christ.* It is accepted by faith as a fact; its consequences are also a fact to faith. In His being raised is contained and involved the further miracle that Paul and his fellows shall be raised up also. The daily deliverance from the daily, deadly peril is involved in it too. That peril is a foretaste of death; the life, thus daily guarded and renewed, is, in principle and in foretaste, a real raising up again. Whether in now daily renewing and preserving that life, or in raising it up from the grave hereafter, He Who is the God of Paul's life is really doing one and the same great work. The daily deliverance is a simple corollary of the truth that the eternal life, in which resurrection is just one episode and incident, is already begun, and is to be kept "unto the Day." Faith accepts the premiss—Christ's resurrection—as fact; faith draws the inference, with its own sure logic; and accepts, and rests in the consequence—Paul shall be raised up. This strength of assurance affects his whole life; in its every expression of character. Such a faith, resting on such a God, "stiffens" the man; "puts a backbone" into him. When Paul speaks he "uses great boldness of speech"; he does not need to speak in *equivoque* or doubt, with bated breath or qualified certainty, or in "adulterated" Gospel. [He is a preacher who preaches not doubts, or speculations, or hopes, but what to him are certainties—"*I believe*, **therefore** *have I spoken.*"] And so, finally,

4. *Victorious.*—(1) The "*earthen vessel*" is "*troubled,*" is "*perplexed,*" is

"*persecuted*," is "*cast down*"; it "*always bears about the dying of Jesus*"; it "*perishes*"; naturally it would "*faint*." Yet it is not "*distressed*," nor "*in despair*," nor "*forsaken*," nor "*destroyed*"; the treasure enriches many; the words are bold, with a confidence victorious over doubt or any human and unworthy motive whatever; it "*looks*" away from the "*seen*" and "*temporal*" to the "*unseen*" and "*eternal*"; it pursues its way, in the midst of all and in the face of all, accounting all as but "*the momentary lightness of our affliction*." It is, on the one side, the victory of the vessel of frailest "*earthen*" mould and material; on the other, it is the victory of the resurrection-working power of God. The "*excellency*" of the power which works the daily wonder, guarantees, and will by-and-by make real, the weight of glory which grows from "*excellency*" to "*excellency*." [Same words. Note also i. 8.] The eternal victory is but the present daily victory "writ large." (2) "*Not distressed;*" there is always "the way of escape." The close-hemming foes—men and circumstances—are never suffered to complete and close up their environing circle. The threshing-roller has its limit of weight; our strength of patient endurance is always just a little more than the heaped-up burdens. Frail as is the vessel, it is always made strong enough for its purpose. "*Not in despair;*" the word is alway heard; "I have given thee the valley of Achor for a door of hope" (Hos. ii. 15); somehow it is always possible for the pilgrims to walk out of Giant Despair's castle; they have a master key for every door. "*Not forsaken;*" the army of Christ has no stragglers who are left behind to perish; the weakest, who falls out of the ranks when the pursuit is hot, is never abandoned. The Captain Himself is the rear-guard for His host. "*Not destroyed;*" the touch of mother earth, when they are stricken down or thrown in the wrestle, seems to set them, Antæus-like, on their feet again. The wrestler is flung upon the ground, but never appeals in vain to his King and Master, Who from His throne is watching the struggle; it is not He Who, with thumb turned down, will leave him to his adversary and his fate. (3) "*Worketh out*." Which is more than merely victory, and much more than deliverance. It is the strain of the pæan of Rom. viii. 37, "**more than** conquerors." The trials have helped the afflicted man. He has not only been through them, but on them has levied contribution toward his best welfare. He has not only escaped, but they have helped and enriched him. "One more such victory, and I am ruined," cried Pyrrhus. There have been to this conqueror, Paul, no victories "only less calamitous than" defeats. Conquerors! "More than conquerors!" (4) *Whilst we look*. ["Whilst Peter looked" at His Master, he could tread the waves; they bore him toward his Master.] Let a man become secular in temper and view and outlook, he will soon find that life's burdens are becoming crushing in their "*weight*." If he *focus* (as the photographer says) for the near, the distant will become faint and indistinct. To get his picture right, he must focus by the things "*eternal*." He focusses for an unseen object, but the earthly, temporal foreground somehow always thus comes right. In life's scheme and picture all is then in due and true proportion and definition.

## *SEPARATE HOMILIES.*

Ver. 2. *The Sphere of the Pulpit.*—"*Commending ourselves to every man's conscience*." Of all who teach the religious teacher occupies the highest position. Others are giving in the school the lessons whose actualisation shall be the principles and habits and conduct of the men of the coming generation. They have to do with *mind*, and that in its most impressible condition. They may give to very much of the stream of the world's moral and social life a tinge and a direction, as they please. But the

*religious* teacher ought to be, might be—every faithful one is—one who deals with the *conscience.*

I. **With the conscience in every man.**—Without the physical senses, I could never feel my connection with this material system,—the green earth beneath my feet, and the blue heavens that encircle me, would be nothing without these; so without this conscience, this moral sense, I could have no idea either of moral government or God. Had you no conscience, I might as well endeavour to give to one that is born blind and deaf the idea of beauty and sweet sounds, as to give you the idea of duty and God. To this the religious teacher appeals. Expect him to appeal to it. Honour him in proportion as he does.

1. *There is a ministry which reaches the conscience through the passions.*—Hope and fear are appealed to; emotions are stirred, tears flow; the fear of wrath leads up to a sense of sin and guilt. There is a ministry which aims at the *imagination.* Beauty is the idea. Whatever in thought or form, in sentiment or style, will please the taste or charm the fancy are freely introduced. Truth is cast into sonorous periods, and presented in poetic pictures. No reason why not, if only all be consecrated to the use of reaching, in order to awaken, the conscience. The attention must first be arrested, *somehow*; else the preacher is a dead failure. The wrong is done, when the catching and satisfying of the imagination becomes in itself the goal of the aim of the preacher, and the only desire of the hearer. So of the ministry which aims mainly at the *intellect.* Verbal criticism, philosophic discussions, subtle distinctions, ingenious hypotheses, are the staple of its discourses, with the accompanying danger that the whole should be exclusively an intellectual performance. "Commending ourselves to every man's intellect," by all means. Religion has nothing to fear—revealed doctrine has nothing to fear—from fair, sober, *reasonable* reason and intellectual scrutiny. But neither the preacher nor the hearer should be satisfied if the intellectual exercise and the satisfaction it gives, be all. This should be made one of the approaches, one of the "parallels," by which the spiritual engineer seeks to get near, that so he may seize the stronghold of the conscience for his Master, Christ. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal" (x. 4); the aims must not be carnal either. In the day of his "success" and gathered applause and goodwill, let the preacher ask, "Did I aim at, did I reach, the conscience?" In the day of his "failure," and accompanying despondency, let him pray that the "poor performance" may—perhaps the better for its poverty—have reached a conscience. Let the hearer ask for a preacher who is mighty with the conscience.

2. "*Every man's conscience.*"—The torpid; those that have never been awakened, or who, having been once aroused, have relapsed into insensibility again. Unhappily the most commonly occurring condition of the conscience. Turn over the pages of universal history; look the world through; search its literature, institutions, trades, professions, amusements; you see the flames of *passion* reddening the sky of ages; the creations of the *imagination* filling the horizon; the inventions of *genius,* the theories of *intellect,* piled mountains high on every hand; but the activity of Conscience all but absent and unknown. The *alarmed and guilty conscience,* with its fear of wrath, vain struggles against the tyranny of Sin, all the experiences of Rom. vii., consciousness of accumulating transgression, and so of accumulating guilt. *The peaceful, victorious conscience.* From which the sense of guilt has been removed; which has won a conquest over all the inner antagonists of the soul; which soul has ascended the throne within the man, grasped the sceptre, and is ever carrying out the will of God, and rejoicing in God through Christ, by Whom it has "received the Atonement." *For each of these the true pulpit must have*

*its message;* the true Christian teacher is the man who has the word for each, which it at once recognises as the message from God, just adapted to its necessity.

II. **Through the medium of "the truth."**—Paul saw "truth" everywhere, breathing in pagan systems, sparkling in philosophic speculations, circulating in the general current of common language and common life. But to his mind, *The Truth*—that which humanity wanted to raise it from its fallen state—the sin-correcting, soul-saving truth, was this: The special revelation of God developed in the teaching, embodied in the life, illustrated and concentrated and energised in the death, of Christ. This central Truth alone could uncover in daylight the awful heavens of being, and bless with new life and beauty this fallen earth. Paul could move, he knew, the conscience of his age by this potent instrument. With this he was an Archimedes who could move a world. Truth "as truth is in Jesus" (Eph. iv. 21).

III. **As under the felt inspection of Almighty God.**—Paul "set the Lord always before him"; he toiled and suffered "as seeing Him Who is invisible." This abiding consciousness of the Divine inspection would remove three hindrances to the work of the preacher. 1. *Man fear.* By all means let the preacher—every thoughful man will—have a deep awe as he stands in the presence of souls, every one of them an heir of the interminable hereafter, every one an originating fountain of everlasting, ever-effective influence—good or evil. He may well tremble as he presumes to influence for eternity deathless intelligences. "*In the sight of God*" will deepen this, but it would destroy the enervating, enslaving, inordinate over-anxiety to avoid the hearer's disfavour, and to ensure his praise and approbation. 2. *Affectation.* In the felt presence of the conscience, and, still more, of God, a man will become, and will be kept, real. 3. *Dulness.* The man who is desperately in earnest to get at, and grapple with, the conscience, and that by means which he can honestly employ as "*in the sight of God*," will never be dull. And there will be no "commendation" to the best sense of the hearer like this of the evident aim, and still more of the success, at reaching and blessing the conscience. That is the type of minister who will always command an audience. He may offend some, may lose many, but he will be sought by the men of conscience. He will always have a *clientèle.* There is always amongst "the masses" the demand for a man who can reach, and teach, and guide to rest, the conscience in men.—*Suggested by "Homilist,"* ii. 225.

Ver. 3. *Veiling the Gospel.*—Two noteworthy things here:—

A. **A veiled revelation.**

B. **A redeemed man lost.**

I. 1. Amazing! *Two purposes of God crossed and thwarted.* "*Re-vel*-ation?" The very word means the drawing back of a veil. An evil will is seen interposing a veil again! A man "for whom Christ"—mark that, no other, no less, than **Christ**—"died," "lost." Now in the process of being lost,—such is the force of Paul's present participle. It is *the* mystery to thought; a mystery which sooner or later "brings us up" sharply, as if before a dead wall that stops all further progress in our knowledge, in all inquiries on moral questions. The Problem of Evil; the Problem of Will. The marvel that the Creator has made so many of His own handiwork to possess a Self so like His own in its self-determining power, that it can use its power to say "No" to its very Maker and His purpose and desire.

2. *The revelation is a Gospel.*—Thoroughly, and only, practical in its object and scope; not at all to help speculation, or merely to give certain knowledge, even on the topics most urgent to the inquiring intellect. For ages, behind the veil, God had been preparing for the day when it should please Him that "the mystery

hidden from ages and generations," "the mystery which had been kept in silence through times eternal," should at last be "made manifest" (Rom. xvi. 25). At last, like some completed statue beneath its covering, it stood waiting for the moment—it came at Pentecost—when the veil should be lifted, and *The Gospel* stand out in all its perfection of salvation-beauty. [A sub-section of this revelation is in Isa. xxvii. 7, and 2 Tim. i. 10. All heathen, all natural life—to some extent even Jewish life—was spent under the overspreading "shadow of death." A terror and a bondage (Heb. ii. 15) to thought and heart. In the Gospel of Christ—of the *dying and risen* Christ—the meaning of death, and the certainty of a life beyond death, and the hope of blessedness in that life—all stood out in the only certain, serviceable light which mankind possesses. It was revelation of the morning, when "Light shines out of darkness." Night is a "covering" cast over all creation. What under its veil the great creative forces are silently producing, is unseen till the day dawns, and "brings to light" what was there all the while, but under the veil.]

3. *The central Fact, the central Figure, of the Gospel is Christ.*—He is in Himself a Revelation; His very appearance amongst men is a Gospel. The ambassador of England resident in Paris is, in his very residence there, a token of peace and amity between the two nations. [His absence or withdrawal would be understood to mean ruptured relations.] Christ going in and out amongst men for thirty-three years was in Himself a message of peace, a message of goodwill, from God to men. [Then, as below in ver. 6, He discloses God to men's mind and heart; in a fashion also which is "good-news" of God, as well as from Him.]

II. *But there is a* **velation,** over against this **revelation.** There is a **veiler** as well as a **Revealer.**

1. *The blindness is moral.* — The "*mind*" is "blinded"; but the mischief goes deeper; to the "conscience" (ver. 2), and the "heart" (ver. 6). The man who on these topics is enlightened in mind, knows that the light reached the mind through these channels. "After all, it is to moral causes that we must assign a main influence in the . . . prevalence of unbelief. 'Our systems of philosophy,' said Fichte, 'are very often but the reflex of our hearts and lives.' . . . Each man's position towards Christianity is ultimately determined by the inward condition of his heart and will. . . . Action must go before knowledge (John vii. 17), and a certain inward condition prepare the way for the Gospel message. To understand the truth we must first stand in it (Jer. xxiii. 18; 2 John 9), or at least be willing to enter and submit to it. Wherever there is a real [ignorance of and] aversion to the Gospel, ethical causes have much to do with it. There is something humiliating in the first aspect of all Christian truth. It reminds us of personal responsibility, of personal shortcomings. It wounds our natural pride and self-sufficiency. . . . How hard it is to many great and aspiring spirits to come down from their high estate and confess to guilt and error! For others Christianity has too much that is alarming. It makes of human life so serious a thing; it warns so solemnly of the nearness of eternity, and the certainty of future judgment; its sign of the cross reminds us so awfully of the Divine holiness and the hatefulness of sin. Too many also are not prepared to fight their way through all these terrors to real and solid peace, and catch at the idlest doubts and shallowest surprises to escape from the pressure of unwelcome truths. What pride does for the former class, fear does for those in deterring them from embracing the faith of the Gospel. And as for both these classes the entrance to the way of life is found too strait, so for many others the way itself has proved too narrow. Their love of ease refuses to engage in the

striving after holiness; their love of gain and worldly honour shrinks from the thorny path of humility and self-denial. With many, alas! sins of sensuality are either parents or offspring of unbelief; nay, every sin may be regarded as a step in that direction." (Christlieb, *Modern Doubt*, p. 26.) Vice, worldliness, self-worship are most common, and most fatally dense "veils." [Even as renunciation of self, consecration to Christ, holy and serviceable living amongst men, gracious submission to God's hand when under trial, are most fruitful preparatives of a heart for receiving the revelation.]

2. *Men can blind their own eyes.*—To see requires light and eyes. God has given both. Man can close his eyes to the light. [Has eyelids as well as eyes.] Cannot give himself light; but can make darkness for himself. But—

3. *Their action is referred to a power, a person, behind them, "the god of this world."*—His culminating temptation to the Representative of mankind was that he should be accepted as "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ!" "Fall down and worship me!" The world is found bowing before his seat (Rev. ii. 13); as Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-nego stood erect amidst a plainful of prostrate "peoples, nations, and languages," so the man "not of the world even as" his Master was not, stands erect, exceptional, singular, to be in consequence cast into the furnace for his disconformity. And the bait is still: "If thou wilt, . . . all shall be thine!"] As behind, and in, and through, the mind of the inspired man, and the will of the ordinary Christian, there stands and works a Holy Spirit, prompting all good, giving all susceptibility; so it is the constant, and self-consistent, teaching of Scripture that in perfect but evil analogy, there stands and works behind, and in, and through, the mind, heart, will of man an Evil Personality, an Evil Spirit, who has made it his business to counterwork the work of God; who is *the* opponent, and in himself the antithesis, of God—the anti-God, the anti-Christ. Good Spirit and evil,—both are disclosures of Revelation. And, in closest analogy, just in the same sense, and so far, as all good is referable to the Holy Spirit, without (in a true sense) taking any merit from the man; so, without taking any responsibility from the man, all evil is referable to the Evil Spirit. *Man blinds his own* eyes; yet "*the God of this world blinds the eyes of them that believe not.*" In all the moral causes above suggested, he is at work.

III. "*The eyes . . . them that believe not . . . them that are* (being) *lost.*"—These stand in closest connection in the text, and in the closest relation in fact. Man has eyes for the supernatural world; eyes which may "see God." To believe is to use these eyes. They who see not, who believe not, are already "the lost." To have these things eternally "hidden from the eyes" is to be "lost" for ever. [Though this may include more than the mere penalty of loss, the *pœna damni.*]

Ver. 6. *The Glory of God.*

I. **Revealed**

II. **Received.**

III. **Reflected.**

**I. Revealed in the face of Christ.**—We are the gazing Israel; Christ is more than our Moses. He is showing no reflected "*glory*"; He is an original source of the "*glory*"; it is His own. When, with Peter and His brethren, we are caught up to some Mount of Tranfiguration, and see the face of Christ glorified, it is not that, like Moses' face, His has been shone *upon.* It is shone *through.* The native glory *within*—"*the glory of God*"—permeates, penetrates, irradiates, the features. The clearest, fullest, altogether peculiar, manifestation of God is made to "every creature" in Christ and His Gospel. Herein is—

1. *The one real and direct expression of God.*—The Infinite brought down, softened, adapted to man's capacity. [Can bear to gaze at the sun when reflected in the still pool.] In nature

we have the indirect, inferential revelation of God; in Judaism the typical, illustrated revelation; in Jesus Christ the direct and true.

2. *An embodiment of Divine excellencies in a living person.*—In their abstract presentation the attributes of God are too little effective with the heart and conscience. Men cannot rest in abstractions, nor find much help in them. They want the concrete; they can only rest in a Person.

3. *This personal exhibition is human in character.*—The essential holiness proper to the Godhead is shown, though in the midst of the ordinary conditions and surroundings of humanity.

4. *All this is in perfect exhibition.*—In other revelations of God men have the divided, in some the distorted, beam; here in the face of Jesus Christ shines the whole, pure, perfect light of God.

II. **Received into human hearts.**—Analogy, Scripture, Fact, all show the necessity of a heart preparation for receiving the glory. The light shines *on* the material world; it shines *into* the adapted manhood with its eye.

1. *This is specially a heart preparation.*—The carnal mind, at enmity against God's law, cannot perceive the beauty of holiness; how should it? Or how should the narrow, petrified, selfish heart realise a love as wide as the world, stooping from the highest glory to the deepest abasement, giving itself unto death that others may have eternal life?

2. *This preparation is a great and Divine work.*—"Religious truths do not grow out of logic; but pre-supposing certain spiritual tendencies and affections, they arise from immediate contact of the soul with God, from a beam of God's light, penetrating the mind that is allied to Him." The heart's eyes sometimes unclose as if under the brightening beams of the morning, gently and almost unconsciously. Sometimes a lightning-flash arouses and alarms. But the opening of the eye is of God. "Whose heart the Lord [Christ] opened" (Acts xvi. 14). All the capacity for this revelation found in the child or in the heathen is of God, the work of His Spirit upon the universal heart.

III. **Reflected upon, and into, other eyes and hearts.**—The Son of Righteousness shines upon men largely through the instrumentality of men. All who have received are under obligation to reflect upon, and impart to, others the light. ["Holding forth the word of life" (Phil. ii. 15, 16) as "lights (=light bearers) in the world," suggests a company holding out and up, at arm's length, high above their head, the Light which may guide other souls through the darkness to the source of Light for themselves.

"Take up the torch, and wave it wide,
The torch that lights life's thickest gloom."]

—*Some suggestions from "Homilist,"* vii. 253.

Ver. 7. "*Treasure in earthen vessels.*"

I. **The Gospel a treasure.**—An unexpected, suddenly new illustration. It was "*light*" in ver. 6. 1. As there it first illumined the preachers' hearts, so here it is *treasure which has first enriched themselves*; there, they next must endeavour to make it shine into other hearts; here, they must endeavour with the Gospel to "make many rich." The preacher can only give what he has first received; can only enrich others with what is first riches to himself; can only preach what he knows, if his preaching is to have the power even of reality, to say nothing of spirituality. 2. It is *the one knowledge*, happiness, power, *which is an eternal possession* to man. All else is valuable relatively to the time and the man, only: this absolutely, in relation to God and eternity. "Wealth is what has exchange value." No other has exchange value at the bar of God, or even it the hour of death. There are men with barns full to bursting, yet "not rich toward God" (Luke xii. 21). Many a wise, fair, lovable life in the congregation is enriched with many "goodly pearls," but not with that

"one pearl of great price," with which it is natural to link this text. "Cold water to a thirsty soul" is this "good news from the heavenly country" to an anxious sinner. What is the "wealth" of a caravan crossing a desert? Water, before all things besides; water, just then, and just there; as the Gospel is wealth to a soul unsatisfied with anything that earth can give. ["What best gift shall I get for my children?" See to it that they are enriched with this.] It has *enriched the world* with its grandest ideas of God, of immortality, truth, purity; giving the highest certainty and authority available to man in regard to these high themes. ["What is the world's greatest possession to-day?" Before every other answer, Paul would put his own: "The Gospel of God in Christ."] [See how this enriching of the world with hope, and light, and moral power, and God (Eph. ii. 12), is interwoven with the rejection of Israel (Rom. xi. 12).]

II. **The preachers are earthen vessels.**—1. Like the earthen crock in which, perhaps, the ploughman found the "treasure hid in a field." It had no value comparatively, and very little intrinsically. The lucky discoverer of the "treasure" would not preserve the pot; if indeed his ploughshare did not, by breaking this, reveal the gold within. [In the "great house" of 2 Tim. ii. 19, 20 there are "for the master's use" "vessels" (N.B. not necessarily *vases* only; the word is vaguely wide and all-inclusive) of "gold and silver," as well as wooden and earthen ones. All "unto honour" and "fit" for service if "purified," those of humbler material as well as of costlier. No necessity to force into comparison two quite independent uses of the same figure of "vessel." If one is to illustrate the other at all, it may perhaps be said that oftener, for the reason which concludes this verse, God uses the earthen rather than the golden or silver vessel, *for this particular purpose.* (The golden and the silver ones have their use.)] The humble "vessel" may often enrich with its contents a soul of far nobler calibre in all natural capacities. The humble "local preacher," or perhaps only "exhorter"—in Primitive Methodist terminology—is forgotten, was forgotten almost immediately, his name a matter since of vehement dispute, who "enriched" the soul of Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Many a man who received the treasure from Paul himself would hardly see more than the Tarsian Jew, the tent-maker, in poor health, full of "tears," beyond most men dependent upon sympathy, talking a provincial sort of Greek, scouted and hunted by his own nationality. Paul was by no means to many converts the "vessel of gold" we prize in him; in himself a real wealth to the universal Church; set high in the "Great House" as not only useful, but as a glorious adornment to it.

2. *Treasure holders.*—That only. [As the sun in Gen. i. is only a light-bearer; light is independent of the sun, and known in Genesis, as in science, to be anterior to it.] Paul and his fellow-workers do not make the Gospel which they carry about and dispense. The "vessel" is the mere "holder"; containing, until it can pour out, the treasure. Simply first filled and then kept full, that they may fill the need of others. Without intrinsic value; containers; and besides—

3. *Frail.*—Yet, as vers. 8-12 show, endowed with a wonderful tenacity, kept by "*the excellency of the power*"; sorely "knocked about yet not broken," so long as the Master needs them to hold and carry about His "treasure." Still only "*earthen.*" The minister is a man. The Spirit of God must do His work through his manhood, and through his particular type of manhood; through his specialties (and frailties) of mental—and to some extent of moral—characteristics. The human medium will affect the Truth in no small degree. This treasure takes something from the human "vessel" which contains it. The

make and temper of the "vessel" will affect the delivery of the riches. (1) The *minister* will remember this; nor be too absolute and positive, as though he could not err. (2) The *people* will remember this; nor expect anything but an earthen, —very human—vessel. It will save mistake on both sides, and disappointment, to remember that the "vessels" are men. Committees and ordaining boards must remember that no ideally perfect men are to be found for the ministry. They must take "earthen vessels," or none at all. However, *they are frail, fragile.* The daily failing of the "earthly [though, N.B., not "earthen," as here] house of the tabernacle" is already in Paul's thought. (See Critical Notes, ver. 12.) Every year sees the "vessel" the worse for wear. "He is breaking," men say of the old minister; whether with a loving tenderness of charity that understands and allows for failing powers, or with an impatience that would hastily put the old "vessel" aside for one of a newer pattern or stronger make.

III. **This secures the fulfilment of a great purpose.**—It is so plainly the treasure, and not the "vessel," which has value; it is so manifest that the man himself is not an adequate explanation of the success of the work, that the thought and heart of man "enriched" turns instinctively elsewhere for explanation. "This is the finger of God" must be the verdict in every conversion. Nobody more than the true minister of Christ rejoices to stand back and be forgotten in the first joy of the soul who has found the riches. "*Earthen vessels*," so manifestly inadequate in themselves to accomplish the evangelising of a world, or even of a Roman empire, that the success of Christianity becomes an argument for its Divine origin. Now that the issue is no longer doubtful, Gamaliel's argument has new point.

Vers. 17, 18. *A Contrast and a Connection.*—"*Our light affliction*," *etc.*

I. **A contrast.** — "*Affliction;*" "*glory.*" "*Light;*" "*far more exceeding weight.*" (Observe in Critical Notes.) "*For a moment;*" "*eternal.*" 1. What *an exposition of* "*our light affliction*" is given in Paul's own case in vers. 8-11, and more wonderfully in xi. 23—xii. 10! In the experience and observation of the people of God nothing puts greater strain upon faith in the wisdom and love of God than the *convergence* of many, and many kinds of, trial upon one single head. Any one would have been enough, we think; yet they are *cumulative.* [Before the smart of one stroke has ceased to be acute, and whilst indeed the heart is still smarting, another stinging stroke seems to fall; another follows quickly, and sometimes on the same place, on the old wound.] Faith, too, is tested by the fact that the accumulation is often upon the head of that one of God's children who, it seem to others, might best have been spared any stroke at all; who seems to need it least, for rebuke or for education in holiness. The burdens are heaped, it sometimes appears, heaviest and most numerous upon the holiest. Paul says, "*Our light affliction.*" 2. Set over against this a "*weight of glory.*" Perhaps not very definitely conceived even in Paul's own mind. At most, probably, there is suggestion of a balance, in whose scales the Now and the Then, the "*affliction*" and the "*glory*," are poised, one against the other. [As in Rom. viii. 18, "not worthy *to be compared* with."] He watches the scale heaped up on the affliction side, yet rising outweighed, and he cries to it triumphantly: "Ah! afflictions mine, ye are weighed in the balances and found wanting!" Yet, as the afflictions are a burden, so we may suggest what, measured by our earthly standards and strength, a burden would even glory itself be. The vessel often all but breaks, with even the foretaste of the future given into the heart of the child of God. Yet see how the immortal vigour of that life contains, carries, that weight

of glory! "Heavy" and "light" are relative terms to strength: The "*light afflictions*" are all but overwhelming to earthly powers, even when reinforced by the grace of God. That "*exceeding weight*" sits "*light*" upon the strength of the life eternal. Everything is revised in the presence of the eternal world: "*Whilst we look*," etc. Turn away the eyes from that, and everything adjusts itself to the earthly standard; the strength reverts to the earthly measurement. The vision of the "*things eternal*" is a real power to us amidst "the things temporal." Let a man be lifted to the level of those and look down upon these; let a man's life be enlarged to the scale of the "eternal," with all his views and standards of judgment enlarged accordingly, and he understands "*this* light *affliction*." He anticipates the estimate of the eternal world. *The principle of the process is seen at work on a small scale in every-day life.* With what leaden feet the hours creep along when aching temples count the number by their throbs! Or when a man must stand awaiting the fall of certain calamity, and can only hang down helpless hands and wait. Or when his heart carries day after day a load of anxiety or sorrow, or smarts under wrong, or slander, or persecution, or misconception, or misrepresentation. Or when, hour after hour, the mind is chained to thoughts which will not be shaken off. Such a day takes a great deal of living through! Every such hour seems lengthened to a day; a day, and much more a year, of perplexity, of tried faith, of walking in darkness,—they seem an eternity! By-and-by, when the cloud is gone; when pain is over; when all perplexing circumstances are resolved into clear, plain providential love; when the year that seemed endless has become only one of the thirty, forty, fifty in the review of the past life; then all becomes simply a passage in the story of life,—"the tale that is told,"—exceptional and brief. Even a year becomes by-and-by only a bar of shadow—rather broad, perhaps, but only a bar—thrown across a path whose whole extent beside shows as a line of light. After a little lapse of time the proportions of things come out more clearly; the "endless" day, the "interminable" year, become mere episodes and incidental passages in the whole life-story. Let a man write to a sympathetic friend, out of "the thick" of it all; he fills sheet after sheet; every detail is of importance. Yet even then he realises, and almost resents the fact, that it is more to live through than to write about. And in a year he will summarise in a page or two all that is salient in the review; in a few years all goes into a sentence, or is dismissed in a written line. So, in the review from the standpoint of the things eternal ["*whilst we look*," etc.; cf. Rom. viii. 18], whether actually occupied or only mentally and by anticipation; if the life be all shadowed over; if the pain last as long as the man lasts; if the one crushing sorrow never be lifted, an "affliction" to the end; if the long strain never be relaxed; yet a very brief space in eternity, a very short section of the story there, and that whole long life will become dwindled down to a mere episode in the eternally continuous life of which "death" is also merely an incident not far away from the commencement of its course. The story of the years which meant so much to live through will become merely a page or two prefatory to the main story, to be gathered up and dismissed in a thought, hardly indeed to be accounted of at all in the longer review of life. The burden whose weight was carried along a road which itself was measured out by its painful steps, will have been decreased "to scale," to fit into the new proportions of life, and will be remembered as "*that light affliction*" which we once carried "*just for a moment.*" In view of eternity nothing is long which is terminable; in the presence of, and actual enjoyment of, heaven, nothing is heavy which only belongs to the burdens of earth.

II. **A connection.**—The one "*works out*" the other. 1. The course of Paul's thought, especially as disclosing itself in the opening of chap. v., makes it evident that *he*, at any rate, had mainly in mind the ultimate release into "glory" by reason of the body's "death." Sickness, a "thorn in the flesh," hunger, wounds, weariness, all in the broadest sense are forms of death. They hasten—they *are*—the destruction of the bodily frame, each in its measure. Not one of them but contributes something to expedite the loosing of the immortal part from its mortal companion. Did the young generation of Israelites look with unfriendly eyes upon the last lingering few of the old generation who lived on in the wilderness? "When will you old men die off? We cannot enter into the land whilst you live." So the Christian, though honouring his redeemed body, yet says to it: "Body, I cannot enter into my glory, whilst I am tied fast to you. You are yourself a burden, and you bind me to a world of 'afflictions' each of which is a burden!" Everything which helps forward "dissolution" (ver. 1) brings Paul nearer to the "*weight of glory*" which is before him; everything which expedites bodily death is not mourned over, shrunk from, counted an evil, but a good, an assistance; "*works out*" the happy issue which is "glory." 2. That may have been *his* thought; but the thought of the Holy Ghost, Who so guided the true and natural expression of a real man's actual feeling that it became a saying, permanent, normal, for all Christian experience, was more than this. More than the quasi-mechanical removal of a physical disability for entering into the awaiting "glory." When even Paul exclaims, "Now is . . . salvation *nearer*," etc. (Rom. xiii. 11), there is more than the rejoicing that by mere lapse of time it has every night come nearer. "A day's march nearer home" is true, but not all the truth of any Christian "hope" worthy the name. If some "lotus-eater" Christian simply folds his arms and lets his vessel drift with the stream of time, then if he be finally saved at all, it is true that he is each night "a day's *drift* nearer home." The very day's drift has in that sense "worked out" something towards the attainment and enjoyment of the "glory." But "nearer than when we believed" includes a ripening for the approaching heaven. Men grow readier as they get nearer. And everything which tends to ripen, to develop, to educate character, and put it upon what are essentially "heavenly" lines even here, is "*working out*" the "glory." There would be no "*glory*" for a man who is not made heaven-like beforehand. To an unprepared, uncongenial, non-correlated man heaven—the place—would be intolerable, a hell. Everything which makes the man receptive, prepared for the ready hereafter of a prepared glory, is so far "*working out*," etc. 3. There is a suggestion in the figure of a "life-*story*," employed above. The old epic, or dramatic, unities were made a bondage to authors, yet there was reason in them when they required that a "plot," a plan, a motive, should run through and bind together into a real oneness every story, or poem, or drama which was to take rank as a work of art and genius. So in strictness no incident but such as would really help forward this "plot" to its development, was rightfully admissible; it was a redundance, perhaps an excrescence or deformity. So, further, every personage who comes upon the page should in some direct way be contributory to the unfolding and to the fulfilment of the author's purpose. Only a childish reader of a story is plunged into inconsolable distress over the troubles of the personages whose futures are being followed. An "old hand" knows that this is a common writer's artifice, and reads on calmly, knowing that such imbroglios of trouble always come out right. A seasoned student of such literature knows that in the midst of such embroilment of fortunes and circumstances

the author is not forgetting his "plot" and its destined ending, but is steadily pursuing his way to it. Indeed, he is *pursuing it by means of these.* Such pages, such incidents, are as really part of the whole machinery by which he is "*working out*" for his personages the happy issue, as are those where all goes smoothly and without a cross. So Paul's faith is that, though he is the maker and writer of his life's story, there is a conjoint, supreme Worker and Author, Who has His own "plot" in the story, and by means of the "afflictions" of life is helping forward the accomplishment of that purpose. *By means of* even the most "untoward" incidents—not *in spite of*, or merely *in the midst of* them—He is leading on His man to, and making him ready for, "*glory*" designed for him. These *afflictions are working out the glory*, which, when it comes, shall prove so preponderantly great above all earthly suffering.

## *HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.*

Ver. 4. "*The god of this world.*"—["Grandis et horribilis descriptio Satanæ" (Bengel, *in loc.*)].

I. **His dominion.**—Usurped. Extensive. Powerful.

II. **His subjects.**—The lost. Who believe not.

III. **His work.**—To blind their minds. By ignorance, error, delusion.

IV. **His object.**—To hinder the grace of God. To ruin souls.—[*J. L.*]

Ver. 4. "*Through Christ to Godward.*"

I. **Godward.**—1. *A Godward look.*—Standing with *face toward* God. *Having God in full view* in all his life. Everything else then adjusts itself accordingly; everything falls into due, true proportion; truth, man, earthly interests, etc.

2. *A Godward hope.*—[Cf. 1 John iii. 21; different *word* for "confidence"; *thought* related.] Hemmed in hopelessly *on all sides*, but can look and hope *upwards.* Hated by his Jewish fellow-countrymen; mistrusted, disliked, even hated, by many of his fellow-Christians; only a few understanding and loving him. But One does understand him; he can commit his cause to that One, and go on in hope.

3. *A Godward plea.*—Looks Godward for inspiration; looks toward Him for help. His look is an appeal. [So Heb. xii. is really "looking *at* Jesus," but leads up to "looking *unto* Jesus" for help.] His need is an appeal; the very sight of his need will not fail to move God's heart. [As the blind or crippled street mendicant stands and says nothing, but simply shows himself to the gaze and heart of the benevolent passers-by. To show himself is itself an appeal.]

II. **Through Christ.**—Can only see God when he gazes upon Him in Christ. Can only see God when he looks in a Christward direction. Down that road also, by that channel, must His help be expected to reach Paul. In John i. 51 all intercourse between heaven and earth is "*upon* the Son of Man," the New Testament Jacob's ladder. All communication between man and God is through the Mediator. His intervention is the middle term supposed in every "transaction" between God and man. Observe how this makes all religious life *Christian.* All has the Christian tinge; everything—*hope* included—has taken on a Christian colour.

Vers. 5-10. *The Preacher's*—
I. **Duty,**
II. **Qualifications,**
III. **Triumphs.**—[*J. L.*]

Vers. 7-10. *The Weakness of the Agents contributes to the Furtherance of the Gospel.*

I. **In their weakness God's power is displayed.**

II. **In their affliction God's help is manifest.**

III. **In their dying the Divine life is revealed.**—[*J. L.*]

Ver. 14. [For Easter. Much material under 1 Cor. xv.] *The Resurrection of Christ a Comfort in Affliction.*

I. **The fact is certain.**—Christ was raised up by the power of God.

II. **The inference is just.**—God will raise us up, and present us in glory.

III. **The conclusion is inevitable.**—God will deliver us out of all our afflictions. He has the power. Intends to do it.

IV. **The duty is obvious.**—To suffer patiently. [How easily a reader bears the distress of the entangled and distressful parts of a story, when he has looked at the last pages and knows how it is going to end (see p. 472). So we know how our life is going to end. "This will kill me," we say. No, it will not. We are being "kept . . . unto salvation," etc. (1 Pet. i. 5).] To speak confidently.—[*J. L., in part.*]

Ver. 15. "*For your sakes.*"

I. **A general principle.**—Vicarious suffering, the death of one, the life of another, obtains sometimes in nature; often in human life; usually in spiritual relations (John xii. 24); pre-eminently in the Atonement of Christ. There is a vicarious element in the purpose of much sanctified suffering. A Christian lady, standing with a friend, by the bedside of her Christian father, who had lain for two years helpless and nearly speechless, said to her friend: "All that, for so long, is *not for him*; it is *for us.*" Many times the work seems perfected in the sufferer, who, as we think, "need not" be kept longer out of rest and glory in heaven; but the sufferer lingers on in pain, to be a factor in the training and moral development of those who minister in the sick-room.

II. **A particular application here.**—Paul's [the Apostolic, and, in some degree, all Christian] sufferings benefit others in that they—

1. *Exhibit* his *Faith.*
2. *Confirm* the common *Hope.*
3. *Evoke* in others a spirit of *Love* and *Praise.*
4. *Exemplify* the grace of *Patient* Endurance.—[*J. L., with additions.*]

## CHAPTER V.

### *CRITICAL NOTES.*

Ver. 1.—Flow of *thought quite continuous* from iv. 18. *For* (iv. 15). . . . *For* (17). . . . *For* (v. 1). . . . *For* (2). . . . *For* (4). . . . *For* (10), etc.; a chain of "*fors*." **We know.**—Partly from having seen the glorified Christ wearing His resurrection body; Paul and the other Apostolic "witnesses of the resurrection" (Acts i. 22) could on this ground all say "*we*." [Note how Peter is led from the "putting off" of his own "*tabernacle*" (cognate word) to the glorified body of Christ as seen on the Mount of Transfiguration (2 Pet. i. 13-18).] **Earthly.**—Belonging to, located upon this earth, contrasted with "*in the heavens*"; *not* "made of earth," earthen. **If.**—Must not be pressed, to carry an inference that Paul doubted whether he should die, and indeed hoped he should not. 2 Thess. ii. 3, written earlier than this, postpones into the far future the Day of the Lord; and must govern all exegesis of other passages relating to the time of the Parousia. **Tabernacle.**—Remember he was a tent-maker. The *garment* and the *tent* occur together in Ps. civ. 2. [In later (and medical) Greek commonly used for the human body.] The *tabernacle* is a temporary dwelling; the "*building*" is for a permanence; like "*mansions*" (= *abiding* dwellings) in John xiv. 2. Observe in R.V. "*from* God" ("an immediate outworking of His miraculous power"); and also the comma after "*eternal*"; "*in the heavens*" is not merely appended to "*eternal*," but is an additional predicate, parallel with "of *God*" and "*eternal*." **Building.**—*Four current views* of this: (1) Heaven; (2) the Resurrection Body; (3) a supposed bodily organisation clothing the soul in the interval between death and the resurrection; (4) a spiritual enduement with the image of God; this last a Rabbinical use of the idea of being clothed. Against (3) remember that this would not be "*eternal*," and that Paul only knows of two kinds of body (1 Cor. xv. 44). For (4) is pleaded the simpler sense thus given to "*not be found naked*"; cf. Ps. xvii. 15. For (1) such parallels are adduced as Heb. xi. 10, and the surface impression of the phrase, "*in the heavens*," coupled with John xiv. 2. (2) now most in favour. Best explains "*clothed*," "*clothed upon*," "*unclothed*" (cf. "bare," 1 Cor. xv. 37, and 38); better certainly than does (1). Difficulty of (2) is in "*in the heavens*." For this and "*we have*," choose between, *e.g.*, Stanley: "The moment that our present house is destroyed, that very moment a new habitation awaits us in heaven"; and, *e.g.*, Beet: "A secure place in which the dead *have*, though they do not yet wear, the resurrection body. Cf. Phil. iii. 20; 1 Pet. i. 4. It is practically in heaven; for the power which will raise it is there. When Christ appears from heaven we shall receive our permanent bodily abode. Hence it is . . . *from heaven*, ver. 2."

Ver. 2. **For.**—Argument of Rom. viii. 22 *sqq*. The groaning is wrought in us by God's Spirit, and is thus a ground for belief that there is awaiting us a real fulfilment of our desire. **Groan.**—"With numberless afflictions, infirmities, temptations" (Wesley).

Ver. 3.—The nearest Paul's language brings us to a strong expression of hope that he should not know any "unclothed" interval of existence, but should put over him the new investment of his immaterial part, beneath which, as it were, the old should be stripped off or pass away. But perhaps *desire rather than hope*. The language is so guided by the Spirit that Paul's expression of personal feeling, whatever it imply, is universally suited to the longing of the Church, even where there is no expectation of survival to the Parousia

Ver. 4. **Not for that.**—Difficult to trace link of thought; hence alternative of R.V. margin. Stanley: "The groans . . *are uttered, not so much because of* the oppression of this outward frame, not so much from a wish to be entirely freed from the mortal part of our nature, as from the hope that it will be absorbed into a better life." **Swallowed up.**—Recalls 1 Cor. xv. 54. Observe "*what is mortal*"; more exact than A.V.

Ver. 5. **This very thing.**—Choose between (1) the change just described; (2) the yearning for it; (3) the spiritual preparation for it. (3) is true, but beside the mark here. Perhaps Paul's thought wavered between, or comprised, both (1) and (2). **Earnest.**—Rom. viii. 23, v. 5, viii. 11, are apposite, closely related, parallels to the argument here.

Ver. 6.—Observe the broken construction: "*Being of good courage . . . we are of good courage*." [The fact of these Epistles having been dictated may (as Dean Vaughan suggests in his *Romans*) account for many of these breaks in grammatical sequence of clauses.] **Of good courage.**—"Though troubles assail and dangers affright;" though death be in prospect. Phil. i. 20-23 a good practical illustration.

Ver. 7.—See Separate Homily. Here, morally, the nobler walk is that of faith; yet walking by sight will, intrinsically, be a nobler thing there.

Ver. 8. **Willing.**—With an active desire. **Present.**—"*At home,*" as in ver. 5. "**Absent**" in Greek is also cognate in root; meaning "*from home.*"

Vers. 9, 10. **Labour.**—"Make it a point of honour with ourselves to accomplish this, viz.," etc. Used in Rom. xv. 20; 1 Thess. iv. 11 ["Be ambitious to be unambitious"] "*At home or from home;*" in *both* their *alternatives* of meaning and relation. Observe R.V., "well pleasing to *Him*," *i.e.* to Christ, before Whose judgment seat (John v. 22, 27) "**we must appear**"; not only standing there as arraigned before Him, but as being read through and through by Him, and then being by His judgment exhibited in our true character; whether as better or worse than men thought us. Illustrate by 1 John ii. 28—iii. 3. **Receive.**—"Reap the fruits of" (Stanley). **In the body.**—Observe R.V. margin. Not bodily sins only, the excesses of its appetites, or acts wrought *by the aid of* its members; but wrought *during the occupation by* the soul. **Good or bad.**—Future rewards, as well as future punishments, are part of the Christian doctrine of retribution. **Judgment seat.**—The *thing* is Roman, not Greek; in Greek the *word* meant the orator's pulpit. "The 'Bema' was a lofty seat, raised on an elevated platform, usually at the end of the Basilica, so that the figure of the judge must have been seen towering above the crowd which thronged the long nave of the building" (Stanley). The Corinthians would remember Gallio.

Ver. 11. **Persuade.**—"You say we do, in a bad sense [as Acts xii. 20, and Gal. i. 10]. I say I do, in a true sense," viz. as 1 Cor. ix. 22; Rom. xv. 2. **Terror.**—"Fear" in R.V., with many commentators. Yet even Stanley says: "Knowing that there is this fearful aspect of the Lord." At most, "conscious that we walk in the fear of the Lord" [in the Old Testament sense] is only half the meaning. "Remembering also what a terror to the ungodly will in that day be the Lord Whom now we reverently fear." **I hope also.**—As 2 Cor. i. 14, 15.

Ver. 12. **Commending ourselves**—"Ourselves" emphatic, *q.d.* as our enemies say we do, because we have no other letters of commendation (iii. 1, iv. 2). "He assumes, with something of an ironical tone, that all they wished was to vindicate him" (Stanley).

Ver. 13.—Takes up charges made by his enemies at Corinth. His "madness" was a fault to some; his "sobriety" to others. [Cf. the generation whom nothing could please (Matt. xi. 17).] The steadily-held middle course is often a rebuke, and often an offence, to the extremes on either side. **Unto God.**—Like a stream which moves unto Ocean but blesses all along its banks by the way, the Christian life is *unto God*, but on its way it is *for man's cause.* If not *unto God*, then, like stream ceasing to flow, it makes marsh and miasma.

Vers. 14, 15. **The love of Christ.**—Choose between (1) His love to us; (2) our love to Him; (3) His love for men, found in us (cf. Phil. i. 8). In fact, (3) is uppermost, foremost, most apparent; but grows out of (1) and (2). As matter of experience the three are never dissociated. **Constraineth.**—"Christ's love left him no choice as to what he should live for, brought him under the control of an irresistible yet most gracious necessity, hedged him in on the right hand and on the left, controlled him with a constancy like that with which the great forces of the universe rule the planets, and determine the orbit in which every one of them must move" (Dale, *Atonement*, p. 260). Note the use of the same verb in Phil. i. 23; and, most appositely, by Christ Himself (Luke xii. 50). **Judge.**—In Rom. vi. 11, "reckon." Paul does here of himself and others what he there urges each to do in regard to himself. **All died.**—See Appended Note from Dale. **All.**—Not to be pressed, to prove universal, *saving*, efficacy for the death of Christ. Still, every man may by grace bring himself within the circle of the "*all*" who "*died.*" Rom. vi. 1-11 compares throughout with this.

Ver. 16. **After the flesh.**—As ordinary men do, in whom "the flesh" permits of no apprehension or understanding of anything but what is "natural." As His enemies knew Him; as even His earthly relatives knew Him, until the Spirit taught them more about Him; as the party "*of Christ*" at Corinth knew Him; as His very disciples knew Him before His resurrection (with such occasional flashes of a deeper insight as Matt. xvi. 17, "Flesh . . . not revealed, . . . but.") The same expression used of the same opponents, x. 3, xi. 18; Gal. vi. 12.

Ver. 17.—See Homily. **New creature.**—In Gal. vi. 15 also. Common Rabbinical expression for the conversion of a proselyte. Observe the variant reading, which omits "*all.*" **Passed away.**—Study with this Matt. xxiv. 35; 2 Pet. iii. 10. Go back also to Isa. xliii. 18, 19, and its New Testament derivative, Rev. xxi. 4, 5.

Vers. 18, 19.—See Homilies. **Reconciled us to Himself.**—This English phrase, somewhat archaic in form, must not be pressed into the service of any "Theory of the Atonement" which minifies or denies any real "wrath" in God, and makes the aversion which needs removing in order to a *state* of reconciliation, only to exist in man. 1. The modern English equivalent for the thought of the older English phraseology would, indeed, be more nearly "*Reconciled Himself to us.*"

The formula for our verse is A reconciles B to A; In 1 Sam. xxix. 4 it is D reconciled D to S. We should now rather say, C reconciles A to B, D reconciles S to D.

The aversion, the estrangement, which needs removing is, as we now oftener think of reconciliation, in the offended party, not in the offending one.

As between older and modern English the *polarity* of the word has got reversed. 2. So, again, the formula for ver. 20 is: Let B be reconciled to A. Just as for 1 Cor. vii. 11 it is, Let **Wife** be reconciled to **Husband** (see below). And for Matt. v. 24, Let **Offending** brother be reconciled to **Offended**. Where again the *polarity* needs, to our habit of thought, reversing. A needs reconciling to B. Heathen **Husband** (unjustly) offended needs reconciling to Christian **Wife**. **Offended** (justly) needs reconciling to **Offender**. 3. Clearly, however, "Be reconciled" in these latter cases—perhaps in all—means hardly anything more precise than, "Take the steps needed on your side to seek and to enjoy a new, reconciled relation between yourself and the offended party." And, as clearly, the force of the Greek word, and not that of the English phrase, carries with it the final decision of interpretation. This (*e.g.* as Cremer, *Lexicon*, p. 91 *sqq.* shows) rather lays stress upon the reconciled, and now amicable, relations arrived at, than upon the process by which it has been reached, and, still less, upon the question which of the parties needed bringing to the other [or which of them made the first move towards a restored, happier relationship]. Of our text he says: "Neither the word, in and by itself, nor the grammatical connection can decide whether God is to be regarded as the antagonist of man or man of God." [On 1 Cor. vii. 11 he thinks that the heathen husband has some cause of complaint that his Christian wife has left him.] "It is [in point of fact] God who forms the relation between Himself and humanity anew; the part of humanity is to accept this reinstatement (2 Cor. v. 20). . . . It is a relation which is changed, which God changes, in that He desists from His claims."

Vers. 20, 21.—These verses expound the *method* of the reconciliation; both so far as depends upon God, and so far as depends on man.

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS—Verses* 1—21.

*Wishing and Working.*

**A. Looking into the Future** (vers. 1-10). Key words: "*Clothed upon*" (1-5); "*At home, from home*" (6-8); "*Christ the Judge*" (9, 10).

**B. Labouring in the Present** (vers. 11-21).

A. I. 1. *Often not a very profitable occupation.*—The Present is our field, our life. "Do with thy might *what thy hand findeth*—close at hand—*to do*" is the first direction for all Christian activity. Dreaming over the Past—pleasurable, or mis-spent; peering into the Future—in hope, or fear, or curiosity; may be the idlest of occupations; fruitless, and diverting from the immediate fruit-bearing of to-day. "What shall this man do? What is that to thee? Follow thou Me." "Forgetting the things behind," is a good deal done towards securing "This one thing I do," with its strength—not of "narrowness," but—of concentration and of consequent intensity and force. The best life-builder lays to-day's "course" well and strongly, as the best security for the next, and the next, and all following "courses" in his work. Yet not without reference to the superposed "courses"; the design running through from foundation to topstone, will be traceable in to-day's work—continued from the lower, preparatory for the upper. The climber is helped to make firm the step he is actually taking, by looking upward. Living *in* the future is useless, mischievous, to the strength and activities of to-day. Living *for* the future is essential to a large life. Paul draws strength for bearing the "*burdens*" of the Present, from the hopes of the Future. Paul "*labours*" in the Present, with a prospect in the Future which—whether to incite or encourage—"keeps him up to the mark" for present duty.

2. *Paul is a prophet.*—His teaching, his visions, of the future have so become the commonplaces of Christian thought about it, that it is hard to realise what amazing disclosures they are. One value of classical, philosophical literature to

our time is that there is recorded the utmost which man could do for himself in the way of purifying life and making it happy,—the experiment whose results stand recorded having been conducted by some of the noblest minds of the race, with all material advantages for the trial, and with the ability to record in the most perfect fashion their methods and results. So, too, in regard to the future, it records for us, in most perfect form, all the best hopes and arguments of the best types of mind and heart, at the very best of their powers, and the "results," such as they were, to which, under the most favourable conditions, they were able to arrive. And it is matter of common knowledge that not one ever got so far as to say, "**We know that if,**" etc. The humblest Christian has in the fact of a Risen Christ an evidence for, and a sample and a pledge of, a future life such as non-Christian thinkers and inquirers, ancient or modern, have never attained. Yet Paul is not merely falling back upon History. He may have known all the little that we know about the Risen Life, and the Risen Body of the Lord Christ, during the Forty Days. The one certain *fact* for us, in regard to the "*house not made with hands*," is that His Body is the norm and pattern for ours. Yet we hardly assert even that much without questions arising, and qualifications accruing around our "certainty." We cannot, for example, be certain that the Body of the Forty Days has not undergone further change and increase of glory since it passed into "*the heavens*." On this bare fact alone can our hope or desire put its foot: Whatever His body in the heavenly places is to-day, that ours is to be by-and-by = "fashioned like unto the body of His glory" (Phil. iii. 21). Paul is, however, carried in his confidence beyond mere argument and inference. The link given in the text just quoted, is one that must have been supplied to him as part of his prophetic message. Matter of course as it almost seems to us, we could have had no assurance of that,—he could have had none, "except it were given him from above." With the facts of the Lord's Resurrection and Glorified Life; with Paul's revelations; with the assurance of our being "in Christ," and, in all the senses and degrees of which our human nature is capable, of becoming thus "partakers with Him"; the believer of to-day looks forward to the future and to death and judgment, saying—singing—"*We know*," etc. He works on "until the evening" (Ps. civ. 23), and then lies down for the long sleep, saying, "*We know*," etc.

3. Are we to say of His Pattern-Body that it is "*not made with hands*," "*eternal*" [happily, yes!] "*in the heavens*"? It is to "strive after wind" to attempt to fill out the hints of Scripture as to the nature of the "future house." It is to try to solve a problem, where there are hardly any *data* at all. It is to attempt to be certain, where the scanty materials available to us for consideration are themselves of uncertain significance. Not that there is gratuitous or arbitrary reserve. "I would have told you" is entirely the mind of One Who said the strongest things He could, and all He could—we may be sure—to comfort friends whose faces, as they gazed at Him in a silence, which only now and again ventured to give birth to a question, showed them nearly broken-hearted, stunned, at the certainty now forced upon their unwilling heart, that they were to lose their Friend. The reserve, the reticence, is unavoidable. We have no experiences, no *things*, to be the alphabet, or the vocabulary, of the language in which a Revealer of more would need to speak. It is easy to speculate upon a body in which every power now possessed by us will be enhanced, and to which new powers will perhaps be given; "percipient all over." It is much to know that the "*groaning*" will be done with; that the body will be no "*burden*" in itself, nor shall our life need to carry any "*burden*"; to live will be no "*burden*" then, as often, to very many, it is now. Tears gone; no pain, no death; all such hints full of sweetest suggestion to suffering, weeping, dying humanity. Here the very work of Christ overwhelms the servant of Christ with physical weariness,

until he can only drop his unfinished task, too exhausted to collect his jaded mind for a word of prayer in which to commend himself to his Master. [Your strong arm and strong bow shoot its arrow up into the air; the perfected rifle may speed its bullet upward. Away they soar, as if they had done with earth altogether, and were never going to return. But gravitation has its grip upon them, and slowly, surely, asserts itself; they slacken, they stop, they are dragged down with accelerating speed. In the all eagerness of their upward rush, they still belonged to earth!] The body is made bitterly to feel the fetters of the gravitation earthward. But done with then! The very intensity of spiritual emotion cannot long be endured; body and mind would break down under long-continued afflux of large communications from God.

4. "*In the heavens.*"—Not to be too precise in exposition. *Even now* "in the heavens"? In what sense? Anything more in the "*we have*" than the confident expectation which makes "things hoped for" to be substantial, dealt with as confidently in the business of life, wrought into all our calculations with as much security, as if they were the actualities of to-day instead of the possibilities of the morrow? Anything more than the faith which counts the reversionary interest present-day wealth, an arithmetic of faith which makes no abatement from the future Principal Sum, but reckons its Present Worth as equal to the full amount? To faith, God's bills of longest date are cash in hand without any discount. As in Heb. xi. throughout, the heroes of faith accept and deal with the things unseen or future, on the assumption that they are as certainly assured realities as any most obviously real facts of the present and the seen. "*We have*" is faith's anticipation; overleaping the interval, thinking itself into the future, when literally we shall "*have*," and shall be wearing and using and enjoying. "We *have*" Him there, Whose body is the guarantee of our own. Ours is a certainty because His is a fact (iv. 14).

5. *This strengthens us for the burdens and the labour.*—"We are saved by (our) hope." Hope gives a resilience to the spirit, so that when the burden is for the moment lifted off, the elasticity of vigorous life is found unimpaired; even whilst under the burden the spring is still elastic. The burdened Christian is not broken-spirited. "Cast down, but not destroyed." From the top of the occasional Delectable Mountains a descent must be made to the River; but the glimpse of the distance and its glory (in which the central figure is to Paul his Glorious Lord, robed in a glorified human nature) is a real force, sustaining and urging onward, as the travellers go down into the valley and plunge into the river. Or, as John (1 John ii. 28, iii. 3) turns the truth, our hope is a purifying force. [As the boy at school in England is continually hearing from his father in India: "I am coming home" at such a date. "I want to find my son in education and manners and character worthy of me. I want to have joy in him when I see him again." And the boy responds: "Father is coming home" at such a time. "I must try and be just such as he would like me to be." ("Found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless," 2 Pet. iii. 14).]

6. "*Not for that we would be unclothed,*" *etc.*—This is not the heathen shrinking from the very conception of a disembodied spirit's condition, as Achilles scorned the idea of being a king amongst the "shades." [Hardly to be connected with the craving for embodiment, which Isaac Taylor, (*Phys. Theory*, chap. xvii.), sees suggested in the request of the demons, dispossessed from their human abode, to be allowed to enter into other bodies, though they were only those of swine.] Paul has grasped the New Testament—Christian—truth that the man is no complete man apart from his body. It is good to be "at home"—even whilst disembodied—"with the Lord." But the perfected fellowship of the man who is even now "in Christ" with that Risen, Glorified God-man, will only begin in the day of the

Parousia and Resurrection. We shall only have our "*perfect* consummation and bliss" when it is both "*in body* and in soul."

7. The marvel of the revelation is that *in the very "groaning" there is ground of hope.* "*He hath wrought us for the selfsame thing.*" [Developed in Rom. viii. 19-27; where we have a groaning "creature"; a groaning Church, even though it is enriched with "the firstfruits," viz. "the Spirit"; indeed, the very "groanings" after full release and full felicity are the breathings of a groaning Holy Spirit within the "sons of God."] The "*groaning*" under the manifold burden—the flesh, the multiplied trials of the earthly lot, the burdensome conflict with the sin which the saved man hates—is no mere sigh of helpless oppression; it is a look, out, up, forward, toward the realised hope. What he is made to groan after, he is created to enjoy; and he is going to enjoy all that he is created to enjoy. His groans and his glory are "all of one piece"; they are parts of one whole scheme of a spiritual education of the children of God, Whose goal for the whole manhood—the body included—is anticipated and assured in the risen glory of the eternally embodied Christ, "eternal in the heavens."

II. "**At home; from home.**"—["Where is your home, little one?" "Where mother lives." Not much help in the answer for one who sought to restore to its mother the lost child. But, for the child itself, the answer went to the root of the matter.]

1. *The presence of Christ makes heaven real, and makes it dear to His people.*—The son of an English family goes to India. All the family have learned the geography of India; what they were taught at school has been supplemented by newspapers and by general reading. The leading points are known. But the city to which his Government appointment takes the son of the house, if even "known," has only been a name on a map, until he goes there. Then it becomes real, for he is real; it is the material setting of his very "material" life. The streets are real, and the people, for he sees them; the houses real, for he lives in one; the village tank and temple,—they see them with his eyes. His letters and himself enable them almost to live there too. And *interesting* as well as real. If even it were real before, it had no real hold upon them; it mattered nothing to them, practically. Now every bit of news of it is noted. Even the commonest engraving of it has a value. The stranger who has seen it is almost a friend of the family. The youngest child of the house shyly "sidles up" to the visitor, with a half-opened atlas, abundantly rewarded if he can attract attention that he may show the map of India, and point to the strange-sounding name; "My brother lives there." So the *visible, bodily* departure—rather than a mere vanishing away, or a quitting of the disciples after some visit, never to return—has helped to make heaven real, and full of interest to the Christian. He loves his Elder Brother, and the place where He lives is dear for His sake. It is real, the real setting and environment of a tangible, visible Body, which, in full view, one fine May morning, went up into the heaven from the top of Olivet, and was not lost, but only hidden behind a veil of cloud. We hear the music with His ears; they are filled with its real melody. We see and deal with its very real inhabitants, for He very really sees and deals with them. His presence there locates "*home*" there.

2. "*We*," "*we*."—For the man of the world has no practical interest in, no sense of the reality of, any world but this. To the Christian man this is *the way home*; to the non-Christian this is *home*, so far as his life has any real home. "We are (only) journeying to the place. . . . Come with us" (Num. x. 29). There were Amalekites and other desert tribes, to whom the wilderness was home; to Israel it was a mere place of passing sojourn. Canaan was Rest. *There has been exaggeration of this.* Paul's feeling is the healthy one. If this world

were wholly and merely evil, he would have been in no "strait betwixt two"; what to choose he would have known very well. He is in a difficulty just because, whilst that is "better," this is good. And to live in either is Christ; "labour" for Christ, and "fruit" for Christ, and help to his dear Philippians, if he remain here; "to be with Christ," if he go. Either way, "to live is Christ"; death only divides the one life in Christ into two sections (Phil. i. 21-24). The wise Christian man will "seek the peace of this (earthly) city," where for a while His Master wishes him to reside and do His work (Jer. xxix. 7). *Yet as real an exaggeration* to ridicule the "unworldliness" or "other worldliness" of Christian men. They who rise highest in "conformity to the image of" Christ feel most keenly the profound cleavage between the very bases of their life and the bases of the world's life; they feel most sensitively the utter discrepancy of the whole direction of their life from, and its irreconcilableness with, that of the very men whose work they do, whose occupations they share. They often meet, as it were, at the same station, but are going in opposite directions; "up," and "down." As they many times stand side by side, their hands engaged in the same task, their faces are in opposite directions. The spirit of life is different. The saint cannot be entirely "at home" (in the homely sense of the phrase) with those to whom the Elder Brother is nothing, and whose interests and life are circumscribed by the horizon of time. The Christian man is a faithful servant of his generation (Acts xiii. 36), or he is no true Christian. But he does not belong to it. [Cf. a German employé in a London business house. Faithful, competent, successful, taking a hearty interest in English life, having a home here. But "Where is home?" The eye kindles as you show him a photograph of his native place, or of the capital of the state to which he belongs, or of his Prince. He has a house in England, but Germany is "home."] Where Paul's Prince and Saviour and Elder Brother is, there is "home." The Christian man should be interested in, faithful to, busy for, this temporary dwelling-place of his; his Master puts him here for a while; but he must keep his spirit *detached*; not rooting here. At length he will be summoned to go and live "*at home*" "*with the Lord.*"

3. *Here again is "confidence." "We know."*—In fact, to Paul, "*walking not by sight*" yet, "*but by faith*," this world, which imprisons the thought, and enslaves the heart, and absorbs all the energies of the man who belongs to it only, often becomes the unreal, "recedes and disappears" into shadowiness; the Eternal becomes the real, not only seen through, but hiding altogether, the world of passing interests and dying men. To him there stands in clear vision the One Man; the circle which contains his life is struck from that Centre. He can bear up under anything; he can go through with anything; when the best desire of his best life, to be at home with Him, is every moment being brought nearer to its realisation.

III. "**Willing rather.**" **And yet the first fact of the hereafter is to appear before Christ.**—1. Without discriminating between the successive incidents of the eschatological programme, extending from death to resurrection and judgment, it is to be remembered that a very real discrimination and pronouncement upon character, a real, immediate "judgment," takes place as often, and in so far, as a man is brought into contact with Christ. He is even now the supreme Test of character. The touchstone-question for an unsaved man is, "What thinkest thou of Christ; whose Son is He?" (Matt. xxii. 42). To the Christian man also is proposed, with perpetual, searching reiteration, the similar query, "Who say ye that I am?" Every man, saved and unsaved, is revealed,—perhaps to himself—certainly to observers "taught of God"—by the practical answer, as given and written out in his life. Every man who comes into contact

with Christ is now in that very fact "judged." Not only is a very real decision being made, and a verdict being pronounced; not only does the man inevitably pass "right" or "left" of Christ; but a very real sentence is being executed. Every man receives already a very real blessedness or punishment, according to the attitude he takes up toward Christ. ["For judgment *I am come*," etc. (John ix. 39).] Christ is even now the Test of character, the Norm of judgment, the Arbiter of destiny.

2. *The first fact of the unseen world is the sight of Christ.*—A man suddenly cut off in mid-career, falling shot in battle, dropping with heart-weakness upon the flagstones of the Exchange, in an instant steps out of the roar and rush of life's busy street into the hush and calm of the solemn presence-chamber where He sits, before Whom the first and supreme question for the new comer is, "What was your attitude toward Christ, what did you do for Him, outside there, in that busy world of so many interests?" Outside there men were classified according to all sorts of tests. Within, standing before Christ, one only basis of classification is known and brought into use: "How did you stand related to Christ?" Men are already being set on "**His** right hand" or on "**His** left." His final revelation is only the consummation of a judicial work which has been ever proceeding in the world. But further—

3. *There is a Day of Judgment in which the* **Central Figure, the Judge, is Christ.**—May strip away much as we will of the figurative, analogical dress of the truth; may acknowledge how often the continuous, present judgment, and the immediate judgment in the hour of death, and the final, open judgment, are hard to keep apart as matter of exegesis. Yet we cannot escape this irreducible minimum of fact. "Probation does not lead to probation, but to issues." "Devil and his angels have hitherto proved but indifferent reformers" (Edw. Irving, *Oration, Judgment*, 7). "The last function of mediatorial sway will be the final judgment, when the High Priest shall no longer intercede for the world, nor the Prophet teach mankind, but the *Son of Man* shall *sit upon the throne of His glory . . . all nations*; gathered for the first and last time that He may *separate them* again to be united no more" (Pope). This is no delegation of universal judgment to a creature. "If the Redeemer were appointed Judge as simply man, . . . His function would only be the visible accompaniment of the judgment and sentence of the invisible God; but that is not the style of Scripture." Yet we need the manhood. "In relation to no part of His office is the manhood of Christ more necessary to our failing hearts, and of no office is it more expressly declared. . . . Not of like passions with us, but flesh and blood. His experience of temptation—notwithstanding His necessary sinlessness—makes Him a sympathising High Priest and a merciful Judge, in whose Divine-human soul, now and ever, to the last extreme of what is consistent with inscrutable holiness and law, *mercy rejoiceth against judgment.*" (Pope.) Would you not hear the sentence "Depart!" from the lips of anybody rather than of *Christ*? The Christ Who has "died in vain for you" (cf. Gal. ii. 21; 1 Cor. viii. 11), Who for years lavished on you a grace you *would* not return or repay, etc. "The wrath of *the Lamb*—**the Lamb**"—is the crowning terror of that day (Rev. vi. 16). There is, even amongst men, no displeasure so terrible as that of justly offended, slighted, insulted goodness,—calm, judicial, pitiful, but inexorable, inflexible; not to be turned aside from executing the necessary sentence which it did not desire, and did its best to render unnecessary.

4. *Those judged.* "*We all.*"—(1) *What an assemblage is suggested! Wonderful for size.* The most impressive sight which London has to offer is a London crowd; the tens of thousands of orderly people in the streets, when some civic pageant or royal procession is passing. But no man ever saw all the inhabitants of London gathered together. Overwhelming; hard even to conceive five million

people in one vast concourse. The mind is baffled as it tries to conceive of a thousand millions assembled, the present inhabitants of earth. Yet to realise this "*all*," there must be added all the millions of the generations of the past, all those of the future. *Wonderful for composition.* Stand with Addison in Westminster Abbey, and imagine the day when these buried dead that people nave, aisles, transepts, chapels, shall all stand together to be contemporaries through an eternal existence. Hardly a mean person among them. Kings, queens, many more of royal stock. The greater kings and nobility of science, art, literature—the "pick" of the greatest, wisest, most eloquent, most good—and the worst!—of this richly dowered England for a thousand years. In this "*all*" are not only the "pick," but the bulk, of not one nation only, but of a world, for all the ages since men were first found upon earth; not only the great, mighty, rich, learned, good, but the humble, poor, weak, ignorant, evil,—everybody. No escape possible. No personation possible. No obtaining a substitute. Writer, readers; preacher, hearers. Mary Queen of Scots and Elizabeth at the Abbey. Pilate, finding himself confronted with Jesus, and their relation reversed. [Men do not so easily wash their hands of wrong done to Christ.] Judas, to get a "look" far other than that with which the eye of Jesus broke the heart of Peter. (2) "*Every one.*" The judgment is individual as well as universal. It is "the only thing absolutely both individual and universal; not even sin and sorrow can compare with this." "It is hard to reconcile the infinite detail with the Divine dignity; but not harder to receive a special judgment than a special providence. Moreover, there is no common conscience; the conscience of every living man is the sure pledge and earnest of an individual judgment." (Pope.) "Thou art the man" is the word of Redemption, Providence, Mercy, Judgment. We are born alone, we are saved by a personal faith, "we die alone." There is no salvation *en masse.* [There was corporate redemption.] There is no judgment *en masse.* (3) "*Or bad*" makes it clear that the "*all*" includes the wicked, who appear for punishment. The rebel citizens and the wicked servants (Luke xix. 14, 22) are all to be there. Yet with an obvious distinction from the judgment of the "saved." It will not be true hereafter that the righteous shall "scarcely be saved" (Pope). Their ordeal will not then have in it anything of a doubtful issue; its peculiar severity and strictness belong only to the present life. The righteous "shall not come into condemnation" (John v. 24). The Judge is their Brother and Friend, Whom, when they awake from the dead, they shall find upon the throne of judgment. It is their glory that in that day judgment will to them be only the ratification and publication of a deliverance from curse and condemnation which long before, in the moment of their faith in Christ, was passed in the court of their consciousness. The real crisis, when they passed from condemnation to justification of life, is in their case behind them. [Just as, though they were long ago adopted, and received the Spirit of Adoption, they nevertheless "wait for the adoption," the publication in the Great Forum, in that Day, of a gracious act which the Father had long ago intended and accomplished, a holy secret of love between Him and their soul.] These appear before the "*judgment seat of Christ*" without fear; they shall "stand in the judgment"; these may "dwell with the devouring fire" of "the Day," which tests men and their work (Isa. xxxiii. 14; 1 Cor. iii. 13). But, whether His people or His enemies, all "*appear*" therein, so to speak, *transparent* presence. An end of all hypocrisy, of all misconception and misjudgment and misrepresentation. An end of all self-deception. An end of all perplexity about the strange complex of one's own motives and character and status. Everything—every man—stands there, revealed to himself and to all standing around; known at last in the very character which God has all along known. The light of the *real* world, the

light of eternity, is turned upon even the hidden things of the heart. How some cower away from the blinding, searching scrutiny of the light of the Presence of the Judge! How some guilty ones—*their own judges*—will shrink away from *themselves* as they there "appear"! How amazed some humble one to find himself there "appearing" in the judgment of His Lord nothing less than a "saint," a "good and faithful servant"!

4. *Retribution follows; in both its phases, reward as well as penalty.*—[Many tests of desert; many standards of reward; many aspects in which is presented the connection between the act and its recompense. *Conscience and light;* how much of the latter? *How blessed with, how affected by, revealed truth? Faith. Works;* these not as basis of merit, but as indications of character, and as measuring the amount of a reward which is all of grace.] "*According to* works," "*By* thy words," and the like expressions, all are distinct in idea from this of our paragraph: "*Shall receive the things done.*" [Perhaps over-subtle to press this too much; yet in other places more is said than "*shall receive for the things done*"; more is apparently asserted here.] Men's reward does not only follow upon conduct, but is a harvest from seed which was sown by conduct, and springs out of conduct. Heaven and hell are life continued, and intensified, on lines essentially projected here, in position and direction, and only "produced" eternally there. Men are now making no small part of their own heaven and their own hell. Men do here literally often "*receive the things done in the body.*" No worse specimens of misery than old sinners, past the possibility of gratifying sinful appetites, yet still cursed with them, clinging to them; squeezing the sucked orange, in hope of getting a drop of the old pleasant juice. "Filled with his own ways" (Prov. xiv. 14), abandoned to the curse of his own sins. Like, as Maclaren suggests, the man in *Thalaba*, who suffered the devil to kiss his shoulders, and from the kissed spot sprang serpents, fed by, and feeding upon, his very life. [Not the entire truth. There must be some form of punishment *ab extra*, or there is in no proper sense a *pardon* of sin. If the only hell is that which a sinner prepares for himself, within himself by his alienation of his heart and mind and will from God, and by the choosing and cherishing all things evil ("Myself am hell"), then the only pardon possible is through, if it is not itself, renewal and regeneration. The mere penalty of loss is a true penalty *ab extra*, whilst underneath all the symbolism and analogic language of judgment there is something beyond "loss."] "Always the dreadful burden is laid upon the sinner himself. He is viewed as the author of his own character, and as responsible for his own ruin. In the integrity of his body and soul he reaps the fruit of his own devices; part of his sin was the sensuous misuse of his body; part . . . the turning away of his spirit from God; in the reunion of body and soul he suffers the result. . . . The final condemnation is that of a nature now fitted for it [self-"fitted for destruction" (Rom. ix. 22)]. The harvest is the character formed by the seedtime. . . . Not that the Judge assigns eternal punishment for temporal sin; but that sin is taken confirmed into eternity. . . . Not because man has sinned only, but because his nature is turned away from God." (1) [Pope, *Compend. of Theol.*, iii. 421. Remark the best reading in Mark iii. 29, "eternal sin." Also, in connection with the question raised,—perhaps, too urgently pressing the grapes in the wine-press of exegesis,—*à propos* of the Unmerciful Servant (Matt. xviii. 23-34, with its commentary "*so*," "*thus*," ver. 35), whether sins once pardoned return upon the forgiven man, if by new sin he fall away from his mercy; remark that men are not punished, *merely or chiefly*, for having done such and so many sins, but for their whole attitude towards God and His Son. They are, in each one single act, sinners. (*I.e.* they are so now by their own choice, as well as by inborn bias. It may be questioned whether sin as a birth-principle is ever punished, now that the race has been

redeemed by Christ.)] Men have "treasured up for themselves wrath" [like a huge reservoir at the head of a valley, behind whose retaining dam is accumulating a mass of water which one day bursts the barrier and sweeps down, carrying everything before the rush of its irresistible flood]. "*Their sin*—itself—finds them out." On the other hand, a man's life and faithful service "returns into his bosom." "Their works do follow them." "*They receive the things done;*" which is according to many analogies of God's methods of reward and punishment on this side of death. (2) It is also suggested that, whilst "*done in the body*" limits the matter of judicial inquiry to the actions of this earthly life, yet that these may be dealt with, not only in themselves, but, constructively, pregnantly; that, not the actions only, but their fruits, good or evil, in other characters and lives, reproductive also in successive generations, long after the actor himself is dead, are to be taken into account. The time occupied in committing a sin is in no sort of relation to the length of the punishment which it deserves. Yet if "an eternal penalty for a temporal sin" be a difficulty, this suggestion may perhaps lessen the difficulty. Certainly, to make new punishment continually accrue because of new sin committed in eternity, may be truth; but our passage limits the direct and immediate recompense of the Day of Christ's Judgment to the "*deeds done in the body.*" And in any case the consummate reward is, to be **"accepted of Him."**

B. **Labouring in the Present** (vers. 11-21).

I. **A new man** is labouring to bring other men into

II. **A new relation** to God, "reconciliation"; and this from

III. **New motives and springs of action.**

[In addition to the material given under Separate Homilies may be said:—]

I. **The new creation of the individual is no isolated act of grace.**—The Church is no aggregate of such individuals each of whom is a specimen of God's work, whose significance begins and ends with that particular instance. Each single conversion is part of a great plan. "What does it matter that I should get converted? What if I do not?" It matters this, that God is straightening out the sin-entangled course of human history, and that each single life is one of the threads. It must be made to lie even with the rest. The new direction given to the "new man's" life is but one of many lines, all convergent towards God's goal for humanity and the world. [Hence the Saviour justifies His act of healing at Bethesda, by paralleling it with God's incessant operativeness in the world which He has made, which Sin has marred, and He is making anew. God is spending the Sabbath of His rest from creation, in ceaseless recovery of man, soul and body, from the consequence and curse of the intruding Moral Evil in His world. The healing of the lame man was one act of the great Redeeming Activity, which reproduced in the physical sphere, and on a tiny scale, the great Work of God. Hence it was suitable work for the earthly Sabbath of the Son of God (John v. 17-30).] When His voice sounds through "the new heaven and the new earth" the proclamation "I make all things new," these words will only be the latest, largest, grandest, of a series of such utterances. In every "new creature's" heart it will have been anticipated long before. The man "in Christ" was made "a new creature," that he might fall in with the march and movement of God's fulfilment of His Redeeming Purpose, whose climax and consummation and goal are a new earth, peopled by a new Human Race, headed up by a new Adam. Man and environment, by a convergence of many lines of restorative operation, then find themselves brought together, each perfectly fitted for the other and both for God.

II. **Travelling backward, the first step of the recovery is reached.**—"*Be reconciled to God.*" Man's relation to God, his attitude toward God, is all awry and out of joint. But the Recovery really began farther back. God needed to

make reconciliation on His own side. God's first advance needed making; now it needs meeting by a responsive advance by men. The balance of truth must be held even. A mechanical scheme—one which, at all events, became stiffened, hardened, into mechanical—may have set a wrathful God over against a merciful Son, in an exaggerated vividness of "dramatic" representation of a transaction between Father and Son *re* mankind. But all wrath must not be denied to God. The difficulty lies in adjusting what is true of the timeless being of God, to the historical sequence in the story of the world and in the life-story of the sinner. Historically we say that reconciliation was effected at Calvary; yet it was earlier proclaimed, in the Immanuel-Child of Bethlehem; and, as happy matter of fact, the fallen race has never had to do with a God out of—apart from—Christ. All His dealings with the race, all His dealings with the individual, have had reconciliation-grace as their background. Much "broad" theology, in endeavouring to find adequate expression for this truth, is apt to forget that this gracious leaning of God towards mankind, and towards the man, is from the first represented in Scripture as *an altered relation.* We cannot *date* the alteration by our chronology; it is certainly no later historically than the *protevangelion* of Gen. iii. 15. "Then *all died.*' Who shall say, in the profoundest sense, *when?* But in speaking of God thus "*reconciling the world to Himself,*" we look, naturally enough, to Calvary, but we hear—as not fathoming the meaning—of "a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. xiii. 8). ["My blood boils when I see a Frenchman," said Nelson, a typical Englishman of his time in this. God is not Nelson; but the words illustrated and exhibited an antagonism not against the individual as such—the particular Frenchman was not in issue—but against the very nation and race of Frenchmen.] Conceivable—necessary as matter of clear thinking to conceive of—a wrath against the race as such, to which the individual was of necessity obnoxious and exposed. Not only conceivable, but certain, that now "*in Christ*" *the world is so reconciled*, that to be a man is no barrier to peace; there is no "wrath" against the race as such [the *race* are now "the men of God's good will"]; nor any against the individual, unless he awaken it by his personal sin and personal evil character. It is for him now to say whether there shall be "*reconciliation.*" The ambassadors plead, "*Be reconciled.*"

III. **New motives actuate and urge them.**—And all centre in, radiate from, converge towards, **Christ.** "**Constrain them.**" *The love of Christ* constrains them. (See Critical Notes on this great word.) The "new man" now knows Christ in a new way. The very love of Christ is in him. Love understands love. And love begets an overmastering passion for saving men, and makes the plea "*Be reconciled*" intense in its earnestness of entreaty. "'*The terror of the Lord*" rules them. No need to exclude either "fear" or "terror"; we want both, for faithful exegesis and for complete fact. "*The Lord*" is Christ. To the enemy His holiness is a terror, or should be. To the very reconciled man himself there is an awe, a reverence, a godly fear, in that same holiness, with all his love for his Master. He looks at himself who was once a rebel; he fears to grieve, or lose, the love which was, and is, such free grace. He looks at the rebel who will not "be reconciled"; and he trembles to think of the terror for him when, whether he will or no, he must come into contact—conflict—with the holiness of Christ the Judge. And he therefore persuades men; runs through all the gamut of a "changing voice" (Gal. iv. 20), if he may win them to surrender and reconciliation. No motion lower than these, or less intense, will keep the evangelist-heart in perpetual vigour in the settled pastor. The new man must see men who are what he was, with the new eyes; must feel towards them with the new heart and the new passion, which are those of Christ Himself. No wonder that he tries to be "*sober.*" Still less wonder if men call him "*mad.*"

Sober or mad, men are in view; God is in view; that God and those men are somehow, if he can compass it, to be brought together "*reconciled.*" The Church, the world, the Redeeming Work of God, want a succession of such "mad-men"!

## HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—*Verses* 13—17.

*A Man in Christ a New Man.*—He has three things new.

I. **A new imperial impulse.**—Wonderful is the power of a strong passion over our natures. It fires the brain, stirs the blood, bends every energy to its own use. The love of Christ thus filled and fired, pressed, urged, overbore Paul. It carried him on like a resistless torrent. It was the regnant impulse—everything else was subject to it. ["It is impossible to read his Epistles without discovering that Christ's love had been so revealed to him that it had taken possession of his thought and of every active energy of his nature, and stirred the profoundest depths of his emotion. Sometimes in a long passage the name of Christ occurs in almost every alternate line; sometimes he breaks away from an argument at the bare mention of Christ's name, unable to govern the vehement impulse to dwell upon Christ's glory and grace; at other times *just as a ship is gradually swept out of her course by a strong and silent current in the sea*, St. Paul is gradually carried away from the point for which he seemed to be making, by the habitual drift of all his deepest affections towards Christ." (Dale, *Atonement*, pp. 260, 261.)] *This is incomprehensible to those who have it not.* The Apostle's contemporaries thought him, under its influence, to be "mad." They could have understood ambition. [Paul's only ambition was "to be accepted of Christ."] They could have understood avarice. [When Lord Macaulay went to India it was evident that he felt keenly the parting from England and his family circle. "The pains—acute enough sometimes, God knows—of banishment." But he went avowedly to make a fortune—£10,000 a year; could save several thousands every year. Had hope of return at end of five or six years. "Comfortable, though modest, home; certain of a good fire, a good joint of meat, a good glass of wine, without incurring obligations to anybody, and perfectly indifferent—at least as far as our pecuniary interest is concerned—to the changes in the political world." Not a bad set-off to the pangs of parting! Yet with none of these prospects for his days of return, with only isolation in his work, and a *status* by no means too highly accounted of in India, many a missionary has cast away bright prospects in England or Scotland or the States, and buried himself in that same Indian land, because the Love of Christ—Christ's own love for souls—had got hold of him with a force the man of the world does not understand. See Trevelyan, *Life of Macaulay.*] A man must have this feeling to interpret it. This love alone understands itself. *It arises from reflection upon the death of Christ.* It is not an inbred passion or a blind impulse; it comes thus: "We thus judge," etc. "*All.*" Take this away, and it is a mutilated Gospel. That all are not saved is no objection. In material nature much seems wasted. Rain and dew fall on the rock and on the desert sand. Light falls day after day, where no living thing seems to need or use it.

> "Full many a gem of purest ray serene," etc.
> —*Gray's "Elegy."*

Fruit ripens and falls and rots where there has never been a man. Wealth sufficient to enrich the millions who die in want is buried beneath the mountains or the seas. Medicine for half the ills of life is shut up in minerals and plants, whilst generations die without knowing of the remedy which nature has provided. [See this in Butler, *Analogy*, part ii., chap. 3.] There are men coming after us who

will discover and enjoy these; and who will similarly avail themselves of the blessings of that atonement which generations have either ignorantly rejected or wickedly despised. This contemplation suggested two strong reasons why Paul should be so zealous in the cause of Christ. The whole world was in a ruined condition [see Critical Notes on this]. The principle of self-sacrifice is the binding principle of action. Selfishness is the death of the world. We are all "links in being's endless chain," and we cannot move without influencing others. Yet man seeks to do so, and this is his sin and ruin. He who would help the world must get this love of Christ, and work by it. No other labour is of any service. Love to Christ is the Christian's royal passion.

II. **A new social standard.**—The world has a variety of such standards—*rank, wealth, social influence*; by these canons it estimates and appraises men. Christianity regards such standards as false and evanescent. It estimates man by his righteousness, not by his rank; by his principles, not by his possessions. Paul once so knew men "after the flesh"; now he sees them all in the light of the Cross, as sinners dead in trespasses and sins. *Let us try our own religion by this test.* What kind of sympathy have we with Christ? There are views of His material condition adapted to awaken our mere natural sympathies. What kind of understanding of Him? There is no necessary religion in such sensuous sympathy with Him, and with the mere beauty of His human life and character. *Our zeal for spreading Christianity will be regulated and guided* by this new standard. Sufficient for us to know that men are men and morally dead; in any country, of any faith, in any social position. *On this principle a Christian will form his friendships.* Godly people rather than merely rich or influential or cultured people will be his choice for his own friends, for his children's friends, wives, husbands. Godliness *and* all these, if he can have them; but godliness first. *By this new standard of valuation he will regulate his activities.* Principles before persons; spiritual considerations before material ones. When we are ruled by considerations of worldly interest or by the opinions of men, merely because they have secular influence or authority, we "*judge after the flesh.*" We should "*know no man after the flesh*" as authorities in creed or conduct; their spiritual excellence should alone influence us. [This wants guarding.]

III. **A new spiritual history.**—"A new creation." 1. *Unlike the old* in some respects. That was out of nothing; here conversion only turns the head of the same vessel round, and gives it a new direction—["converted *to God*"]. The same essential, neutral, natural manhood simply obeys the new law in all its faculties and their activities. The first creation presented no difficulties to the Creator. "*Spake: done.*" In the moral change there are resisting forces; the material is refractory under the Creator's hand. 2. Yet *like the old* in some points. *Something* **new** *is produced.* This passion for Christ, for example, is a new thing in the universe. *This new thing is produced* **by Divine agency.** Man works with pre-existent materials; he rearranges in new order; makes ever new combinations. But in Nature, *or in character*, only God can create. Logic, eloquence, force of interest or will, can reform, rearrange a life, but not call forth a new one. This new something is produced **according to a Divine Plan.** In the moral creation we know not the plan, but all beings, under the Great Architect, are working for its accomplishment. [History for ages converged upon the Redemption of the world by Jesus Christ, and so really also upon the new creation of the individual Christian.] Heaven, earth, matter, mind, even hell unwittingly, working for it. This is for the **Divine glory.** To a gazing universe the new Race in Christ, and the new man "in Christ," are the most consummate exhibition of "the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. iii. 10, i. 12, etc.). The new creation is the greatest marvel of all God's works. So then the things

*without* do not change. Nature, society, events around,—these are only the setting of the man and of life; they may remain the same, but the change is *within*. He sees with a new eye, hears with a new ear, interprets all things with a new judgment. The moment we look at the universe through the new medium of love to Christ, it becomes new, the old universe passes away, a "*new heavens and a new earth*" appear. And all "*very good.*"—*Founded upon* "*Homilist*," *Third Series*, vii. 362, *with added material.*

## *SEPARATE HOMILIES.*

Ver. 7. *Faith* v. *Sight.*

I. **The world of "sight," of "appearances," revealed to sense, a very narrow one.**—Taste knows nothing more distant than the tongue-tip. Touch only tells of a world whose radius is the reach of the arm. Hearing only widens it by the few thousand feet over which the vibrating air will still quiver with its message before trembling away into silence. Smell carries knowledge no farther than the winds may waft an odour. It may bring to a Columbus in mid-ocean tidings of a continent as yet below the horizon. Yet a narrow world, at its farthest. But sight, queen of the senses! It makes us free of worlds most distant, and puts us into communication with far depths in space which even the flashing light needs years to traverse. It can even carry us back into a world that is really past. Men have seen from earth the fires of a conflagration which perhaps long ages before destroyed a world. The rays of light have only just arrived at their eye, and make them, as it were, contemporary spectators of the climax of its history. In mere physical extent the world of the eye is widest, and wonderfully vast. Yet, how narrow! Within the sphere swept by sight how many things escape it. How many things, moreover, are hidden from each of the senses in turn, and known only to some other one of the five. And when man is armed with all five, and all at their best, they only tell him of the world of space and matter and time. There is a world close about him, of which these have nothing to say. Underneath the world of "appearances," there lies another world which does *not* appear. The whole world of *mind* is there. Sight shows one man a flower: "A primrose by the river's brim," etc. An ox sees that much. Another man sees it, and behind, beneath, within it, imagination reveals to him another world. He speaks of this in words taught him not by sense, and he is a poet. Two men look upon the same face. Rays of the same light trace the same [practically, not exactly] picture on the screen which we call the retina. One man sees, and can put upon the canvas his interpretation of what he sees; it is a likeness, and a character too, and a piece of true workmanship which will rank as one of the world's art treasures. Poet, painter, musician, mathematician, logician, all agree that not only the man who lives for eating and drinking and sleeping, having no higher pleasure in life than the satisfaction of a craving or the thrill of a nerve, but also that the man who knows nothing but of material interests, who never goes beyond immediate profit, and that expressible in "£ s. d.," is living in a narrow world. 2. But the Christian man thinks even the widest world of these men circumscribed. Even these, unless they be also Christians, miss a world lying all around them, revealed not to sense, nor to intellect, but to faith.

II. **The Christian lives upon that supposition.**—He is at the very opposite pole to the "secularist" who (*teste nomine*) says, "I know of no world but this, now or hereafter." Such a secularist lives expressly and professedly for this world, and for man, often spending life in a very

noble endeavour to bring man to live his worthiest and to attain to his best for this, his "only" life. Man is to him the climax of creation, and this world is all. Paul says: "I know of a world above this, and outlasting this little life eternally. I know of One above me, to Whom every one of us must give account of himself." The Christian man shapes his course accordingly. It is not, *e.g.*, a thing unknown that a Christian man should refuse further extension of what is already a prosperous business, and should say: "I cannot undertake more. I have now scanty leisure and energy for God and for my larger, eternal life." Not a mere idea, beautiful but chimerical, that a man, in life's prime, and riding upon the very flood of a springtide of prosperity, should say: "I have enough for the comfort of our later years. Enough to ensure my boys and girls against the paralysing fear of want, but not to exempt my sons from the ennobling discipline of work. Whilst strength and health are yet full, I will turn aside and do something directly and wholly for God." There are a few men who educate their sons and start them in life, there are mothers who train their daughters and mate them for life, regarding most the soul and its well-being, God and His claims; just in proportion as they are not "secularist" but Christian, "*walking by faith, not by sight*," and "looking not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen" (iv. 18).

III. **This gives a new standard of measurement.**—Things are important or trivial according as they affect the life of God and of eternity. Whatever helps these is to be cherished. Whatever even threatens to hinder, is to be kept subordinate and secondary. Trials and sorrows get a new importance, a new interpretation. The man of "*sight*" sees the scale heaped up with these, and sometimes sees no counterweight. The man of *faith* sees them, but sees heaven and the compensations of grace and of fellowship with God even on earth. The balance is seen to be more than redressed. The "secular" temper in its dark hour says, "Not worth while to live!" The Christian temper endures, rejoices in, all (Rom. v. 3). "Our light affliction," etc. (iv. 17). Indeed, what a comment upon the whole section iv. 16—vi. 10 is the whole practice of Paul. How the perspective of life is adjusted by the new standpoint. How the proportions of things are regulated. "*At home* with the Lord." Then this is not "home," except as the sojourner in some distant land may call his house for the time being his "home." The real home of Paul's heart is where his Lord dwells. Men judge him, misjudge him. But there is the judgment of another world: "We must all appear—be manifest—before," etc. (ver. 10). And he bears it, and goes on accordingly. Modern astronomy has long transferred the centre of things from the earth to the sun. Christianity transfers the centre of our life from earth to that world where Christ sits, the Centre of all life and love and labour. This short life, instead of being central, and all in all, takes its true place in the system of God's order, fulfilling its little round, rotating upon its own axis of interest, but revolving around God as its true centre, and having Eternity for the full compass of its orbit!

IV. **The Christian knows of the truths which belong to this world, by faith.**—1. He is a *believer*. He walks through the midst of "appearances" with a vivid apprehension of the things unseen, *by means of faith*. Take faith away, the pole-star of his course is hidden; he steers in the dark. Take faith away, all landmarks are gone; he loses himself in a pathless world. Not simply his lantern is taken, but his eye. The very faculty for perceiving things unseen and spiritual is gone. He does make use of reason; he does not shut eyes and ears, and swallow down any marvel proposed to him. It is very *reasonable to believe*, on such evidence as the Christian has. In very

weighty matters, and on the same kind of evidence, often with much less of it, do men act every day. But there is *no demonstration*, no such evidence as can *compel* assent. Euclid *can*; the man who refuses assent is not capable of the reasoning. From Book I., prop. 1, to Book XII., prop. *last*, is forged one long chain of demonstration. But in reasoning about Divine facts a link is often wanting. Faith puts it in. Or the chain is not long enough to reach to the conclusion we see clearly enough to be necessary and right. Faith must supply the wanting length. Our mind tries to bridge over by inquiry the gulf between known and unknown. There are gaps in the series of arches. Faith supplies those missing or broken. Perhaps the bridge of demonstration can only bring us in sight of the opposite shore, and faith must make a leap to her footing on the sure land of knowledge. The arches are not there. But it is reasonable enough to complete the series by putting them in. There is room for doubt. There is only "moral" certainty, exceedingly high probability, no demonstration. 2. "Moral evidence," "moral certainty," common phrases which tell how often believing or not believing depends more or less upon the heart and will of the man—upon his mood, or wish, or interests, or prepossessions. If there be a bias against the conclusion, no evidence is demonstrative. If there be an honest readiness to accept the consequences of truth, then far less abundant proof is enough. I *believe* in a God, and a future, a soul, a judgment. There is much evidence, but certainty involves faith. 3. Very often by ordinary, natural methods we can arrive at no knowledge at all. We cannot build our bridge, but must be lifted "clean over" to the far shore, must commit ourselves blindfold and helpless to One Whom we trust, and let Him lift us into knowledge. Many things of the world of Divine facts can never be known, unless we yield ourselves utterly and simply to be told and taught. But faith is then rewarded and crowned with knowledge. There is a "demonstration of the Spirit" (1 Cor. ii. 4, where see Separate Homily and Analysis) which excludes doubt, given to the man who has Him. "I believed to see" (Ps. xxvii. 13) is a rule of wider application than to Providential deliverances. 4. Prayer, Atonement, inspiration, a Saviour Who is God,—these are to us the bases of life, but every one of them is environed with mystery. [See the worshippers passing onward to an Egyptian temple, down an avenue of towering statues, in the mist and the dim light of very early morning. See the band of Christians making their way homeward, these great truths the way-marks of his path, on either hand ranged in their grandeur. To them it is dim twilight—*morning* twilight, but dim yet. Every Christian believes every truth to have a form of perfect beauty. But all eyes are not equally keen in the scanty light. The best eyes see most of the Divine beauty in each truth; many eyes see how they range themselves in harmony and order; a few give close and careful examination, and are repaid by fuller knowledge of their beauty and strength. But for very much all must wait until the day dawns. It is folly in the critics of the company, to cavil at the order, or to deny the beauty, and, above all, to refuse to avail themselves of their guidance, because they cannot see more. For the man who wants to *walk* by them there is light enough; he sees enough to walk by. He sees them dimly, but they guide him safely. He is content to believe for the rest, and to *walk by faith.*] [5. Let the "bridge" rather be the narrow causeway, stretching away toward knowledge, between two unbounded deep seas of mystery. The waves of mystery often sweep across the very pathway. There are gaps broken in the causeway itself. But *reason bids faith go forward.* Faith makes her plunge from the last bit of clear foothold of knowledge to the next, seen afar off. The eye *sees* no path, but

faith sometimes finds footing beneath the waters. Sometimes none; when she must swim for it, until her foot touches ground again, and so goes forward to knowledge.]

[V. **In regard to God's providence.**—All know of the plunge from knowledge and certainty and clear walking, into dark waves of mysterious dealing which sweep over the path, and almost sweep them away also. Faith says: "Sight finds nothing, but I know the way lies right on. My Father's path never swerves. I follow straight forward. I may have to swim for it, but that way lies dry land!" The experience is repeated again and again, until one last step, one last plunge, of faith puts the foot on the shore where at last men do **walk amongst the realities, by sight in the glorious and most worthy sense.**] [Here the men of sight are inferior to the men of faith. There sight is the nobler, greater life.]

Ver. 16. *Knowing Christ after the Flesh*

I. **Manifold agencies now are at work for bringing men's minds into contact with Christ.**—1. His life is being studied as never before, with new earnestness, with new helps. Palestine is searched and surveyed from end to end, with the aid of the accumulated learning of eighteen centuries. The facts which bear upon His career are eagerly welcomed and at once widely published. That career is being studied from all points of view; by men actuated by the most widely differing motives; some defending, some attacking and destroying; with minds of every cast and calibre. Every doubter, every enemy, tries his hand on "Jesus of Nazareth." The Socialist endeavours to claim Him as the first and greatest exponent of his philanthropic aims and methods. [Said a French revolutionary, "*Le bon sansculotte.*"] Everything conventional is at a discount, and the result is that we get a new, and often a more correct, idea of the externals of Jesus and His life than any preceding generation could obtain. Our time is full of "Lives" of Christ. Men full of learning, of poetical gifts, of philosophical power, are setting forth in new and beautiful lights His outward surroundings, and the influences which—at all events in the case of another, ordinary man—would influence and mould the inner life and character. His Galilæan home, the city of Jerusalem, His countrymen, their habits of thought and speech,—all are helping to make how He lived almost as familiar to our generation as how ourselves live. Pictorial illustration, accurate as never was possible before, is helping to bring all this vivid, realistic knowledge home to the simplest and the youngest of our people. And yet, with all this picturesque and novel setting of the history, with all the skilful dissection of motive and mental process, with all this appreciative study of His teaching, there is the possibility that men should only "*know Him after the flesh.*" Some of the writers of even "Lives" of Christ have themselves avowedly only come into contact with a human teacher, a Jewish Rabbi of unique independence, and of great beauty of teaching and personal character, marvellously influential upon the world's history and thought. But to these He is at most the Greatest of the world's greatest men. With some of them He is not even the greatest, but an amiable, pleasant enthusiast, who could and did make mistakes; who was hurried on, spite of Himself, into unintended, unexpected developments of His action, and to an entirely inopportune and undesired issue on the cross. They see, and present vividly to their readers, a conception, more or less accurate, of a Man Jesus who lived and died in the reigns of Augustus and Tiberius. They aim at doing this, and so thoroughly succeed in many cases that their readers see no more. Writers and readers get back into the position of a Nicodemus or a Caiaphas, and see just what a worshipper in the synagogue of Capernaum or of Nazareth saw and knew; the brother

whom "His brethren and sisters" lived and grew up with; the strange Man with whom Pilate was one Friday morning a good deal "bothered," until he "washed his hands" of the queer, dreamy, half-crazy peasant-"king," who was only too near entangling him in a quarrel with those uncertain-tempered Jewish authorities and people. 2. *Such a success* in realising the human aspects and historical setting of the Man Christ Jesus *is apt to be too successful* with many Christian readers. It is distinctly reversing a process whose results are a remarkable characteristic of all the earliest Christian teaching. Of our text Stanley says: "Startling as this declaration is, . . . it involved a general truth. It is the same profound instinct or feeling which penetrated, more or less, the whole Apostolical, and even the succeeding, age with regard to our Lord's earthly course. It is the same feeling which appears in the absence of local or personal traditions; no authentic or even pretended likeness of Christ has been handed down from the first century; the very site of His dwelling-place in Capernaum has been entirely obliterated from human memory; the very notion of seeking for relics of His life and death, though afterwards so abundant, did not begin till the age of Constantine." [No attempt or desire amongst the early Christians to identify or perpetuate the memory of any scene of His life. God "hid" the burial-place of Moses. The Christian Church, seeing so much more than the Jesus "after the flesh," let go the memory of birthplace and burial-place. (See Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 471.) He also says: "Something akin to this feeling is that which is finally left on the mind after exploring the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. These localities have, indeed, no real connection with Him. . . . Their interest and instruction are secondary, not primary; their value is imaginative and historical, not religious. . . . *He is not here*, **He is risen.**"] "It is the same feeling which is perpetuated in the fact that our name . . . is taken not from the Man 'Jesus,' but from the Lord 'Christ.' It is the same feeling which, in the Gospel narratives themselves, is expressed in the almost entire absence of precision as to time and place—in the emphatic separation of our Lord from His kinsmen after the flesh, even from His mother herself—in His own solemn warning, 'What and if . . . , the flesh profiteth nothing' And this is the more observable when contrasted with the Apocryphal Gospels, which do to a great extent condescend to the natural, or Judaic, tendency, which the Gospels of the New Testament thus silently rebuke. There we find a 'Gospel of the Infancy,' filled with the fleshly marvels that delighted afterwards the fleshly minds of the Bedouin Arabs; there first are mentioned the local traditions of the scene of the Annunciation, of the Nativity, of the abode in Egypt; there is to be found the story, on which so great a superstructure has been built in later ages, of the parents and birth of her whom the Gospel history calls 'blessed,' but studiously conceals from view." (*Corinthians*, pp. 604, 605.) 3. "*Too successful.*" For whilst the Humanity is precious, and necessary to the Christian scheme, the Divinity must not be obscured or forgotten. The Christ must be man, and *born* of our human stock, to be the Redeemer of man. His Jewish birth is an important link in the historical continuity and organic development of the Redemption and its story. His humanity assures all suffering lives of His sympathy. Because He is the Son of Man, He is to be the Judge of mankind. The Church or the Christian who knows the Christ of John and Paul, has always gladly [and *with perfectly natural ease*] combined with that conception of Him all the humanistic touches which (predominantly) characterise the portrait of the Synoptists. But it will be a difficulty, and even a disaster, if the very success in presenting with realistic fidelity and abundant "local colour" the Teacher of Galilee and Jerusalem,

should issue in making it almost impossible to see in Him anything else. It would be to lead back the whole Christian world to the position of even the disciples before the Resurrection and Pentecost. It would go near to an undoing of the work of the Spirit, Who from the earliest days, with a wonderful rapidity of education, emancipated even the Apostolic company from the embarrassingly vivid memory of the dear personal friend, and enabled them to see a Person Whom they must trust and worship as God. After reading some vividly realistic "Life of Christ," the reader is apt to be thrust into as close contact with the Man, as was the crowd in the narrow street of Capernaum (Luke viii. 42), till the "flesh and blood" Christ is alone perceived or remembered. To know Christ too realistically as He was "according to the flesh" (Rom. i. 3), and as men saw Him who knew no more of Him than "flesh and blood" (Matt. xvi. 17)—ordinary human faculties, by ordinary observation and inference—could "reveal," is retrogression, not growth, in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. [An analogous difficulty is being created in regard to the Written Word. The close literary study of the Bible, its literary history, its literary component elements, the very helpful reading of the Bible "as if it were any other book," are making it a difficulty to read it as that Divine Book, in a category apart from all others, which, with abundant and often-repeated verification, the experiment of many centuries of Christian reading, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, has discovered it to be. The more appreciative *historical* study of the Bible is for many readers making more difficult the abundantly justified *devotional* reading of the Bible.] 4. The heart that is taught of the Spirit knows a Divine Christ. "No man can call Jesus '**Lord**' but by the Spirit of the Lord." The Divine Son [like the Inspired Written "Word of God"] is entirely a revelation. The tendency to a merely humanistic knowledge of the Saviour is betrayed in the growing habit of calling Him, in hymnology and devotional talk, "Jesus" rather than "Christ" and "Lord." The Church lives in, as the Epistles in their Christology belong to, a stage far ahead of Jewish neighbours, or even devout disciples, of "Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth in Galilee." The Comforter is come, to take of the things of Christ and show them to His people. John arrived at the discovery that he had "seen and handled the Word of Life." The sinner who finds rest and life in Christ finds, as by a swift intuition, that he is trusting in One Who must be more than a "Christ after the flesh," to be to him and to do for him all he needs, and all Christ does and is. Whole generations of simple believers, with no knowledge of Christ except what the Bible, often in a translation, gave them, and that Bible read without any "historic," or literary, or antiquarian appreciation of it, or of the facts of the story of Christ, have more truly known Christ, than did not only Peter, or Nicodemus, or Caiaphas, in the days before Pentecost, but than does many an author of a brilliant "Life of Christ." The Church and the individual do not need to work their way up through the human to the Divine. Nor do they ordinarily do so. The Spirit brings them directly into contact with the Divine. The "little child" "knows Him that is true, and is in Him that is true" . . . "the true God and Eternal Life" (1 John v. 20). "From the time that we are created anew in Christ Jesus we do not think or speak or act with regard to our Lord as to a mere man. We do not now use any expression with relation to Christ which may not be applied to Him, not only as He is man, but as He is 'God over all, blessed for ever.'" (Wesley, *Works*, vii. 291, 292.)

II. [Wesley also suggests another manifestation of the same humanistic feeling with regard to Christ.] 1. "Some of the hymns in [Watts'] *Horæ Lyricæ*, dedicated to Divine Love,

are too *amorous*, and fitter to be addressed by a lover to his fellow-mortal, than by a sinner to the most high God. I doubt whether," he says, "there are not some other writers who, though they believe in the Godhead of Christ, yet speak in the same unguarded manner. Some will probably think that [in translating many Moravian Hymns] I have been over-scrupulous with regard to one particular word, which I never use myself either in prose or verse, in praying or preaching, though it is very frequently used by modern Divines, both of the Romish and Reformed Churches. It is the word *dear*. Many of them frequently say . . . 'Dear Lord,' 'Dear Saviour'; and my brother used the same in many of his hymns, even as long as he lived. But may I not ask, Is not this using too much familiarity with the great Lord of heaven and earth? Is there any Scripture . . . which justifies this manner of speaking? . . . I cannot but advise all lovers of the Bible, if they use the expression at all, to use it very sparingly, seeing the Scripture affords neither command nor precedent for it." This quotation is of interest, not only as incidentally revealing the writer, but as a note of a peril always lying near to every devout, warm-hearted follower of Christ; a tendency and habit carried to excess in Mystic devotion in every century. Yet it is after all a question rather of sanctified good taste, or rather of an instinct, "taught of God" and yet not of necessity tracing in all cases the same line of division between seemly and unseemly; only worth discussion just so far as, like that spoken of in I., it is both a symptom of, and a help to confirm, a humanistic conception of Christ, which may obscure His Godhead or hide it from the worshipper as if behind a veil of flesh. The devotional language of the Pentecostal Church must not "put back the clock" of the development of Revelation to the days "after the flesh." A Divine Christ must be our norm. From the vantage-ground of the revelation of His Godhead, we may look back upon and incorporate with our knowledge, His manhood, with its sympathy and its capacity of an atoning death. We are *arrived at* St. John and St. Paul; we *look* back to, but do not *go* back to, Capernaum or Nazareth or even Bethlehem. At least, knowing Him now "after the Spirit," we do not *dwell* back in Nazareth. The heart "after the flesh" has its overstated Kenosis doctrine, as certainly as has the intellect of the theologian. 2. To quote Wesley again: "Are we not in private conversation especially apt to speak of Him as a mere man. *Particularly when we are describing His sufferings*, how easily do we slide into this! [Cf. Farrar's cautionary *note* to his vividly true description of crucifixion, *Life of Christ*, ii. 401.] We do well to be cautious in this matter. Here is room for indulging a warm imagination. I have sometimes almost scrupled singing (even in the midst of my brother's excellent hymns), 'That dear disfigured face,' or that glowing expression, 'Drop Thy warm blood upon my heart,' lest it should seem to imply the forgetting I am speaking of 'the Man that is my Fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts.'" It is striking, undesigned illustration of the text, to note how little is made even in the Gospels of the actual crucifying. "And they crucified Him," is the brief, matter-of-fact record, without special comment, of (surely) an agonising experience to sympathetic onlookers. [When John does pause to comment, it is upon another, incidental, detail.] The Death of Christ, rather than the Crucifixion of Christ, is the central point of the developed Christian theology of the Spirit of God, and of His New Testament mediums of its communication. The details of the agony have some of them a value as connecting the history with prophecy; but for their own sake they are never dwelt upon or lingered over. [Similarly, it is a too urgent exegesis, in many cases, to press the details of crucifixion, *e.g.*, in "I am crucified with

Christ"; or, "Our old man is crucified with Him." Death with and in His death is the main point; as it happened, His was death by crucifixion. But it would be very unlike the habit of the post-Pentecostal thought of the New Testament to make that of any importance, as deciding between a gradual or an instantaneous death of sin, of self, in the believer. In many cases, probably in most, any definite allusion to crucifixion might be deleted, and the more general "dying" or "death" substituted, without any least injustice to the thought of Paul or Peter.] The man who is "*a new creation*" knows a new Christ, a Christ Who is one of the facts of that world of "spiritual" things to which his own life now belongs. He does not forget that Christ died. The Atonement made by His death is the foundation of his own hope, and the strong appeal with which he seeks to bring men to reconciliation with God. But he sees and knows and has continually to deal with a Christ who has no "local colour," Who belongs to the world of the universal, the world of all races, climes, ages, "the Son" (Heb. i.). This Son once did, it is true, live, and move, and heal, and teach, as a peasant Rabbi of Galilee; but the man taught of the Spirit does not advert most to that. That Person did hang upon a cross, it is true. That is precious truth to him. He did once fill the manger of Bethlehem as babe. True; and he is grateful for the visible expression thus given to the truth in **Immanuel**. But as a "man in Christ" he knows and has to do with, he is joined to, and grafted into, a Christ Who is on the throne of heaven, **the Lord**. This knowledge is the starting-point of all his judgments upon the pre-Calvary Jesus; of all devotional language respecting Him; of all experiences of the Divine life in his soul. There is nothing in Paul which cannot be known by observation, inquiry, inference. The man "in Paul," is inconceivable. The man "in Christ" rates all that could be "*known after the flesh*" as the least part of his knowledge of Christ (Phil. iii. 10).

Ver. 17. "*A new creature* [*creation*] *in Christ Jesus.*"

I. **A condition.**

II. **A consequence.**

I. **A condition: "If . . . in Christ."**—1. The phrase almost the peculiar property of Paul. Of all other New Testament writers Peter alone uses it, once. Paul's letters are thickly sown with the phrase. When it does not appear in English, it will often appear in the Greek. When the phrase does not occur, the thought does. It is interwoven most intimately with Paul's vocabulary of the Christian life. It lies at the foundation of all his thought about it. To be "*in Christ*" is almost exactly his definition of a Christian. When he desires to veil the personal reference—as John does with his phrase, "The disciple whom Jesus loved"—he says, not, "A Christian man whom I knew," but, "*A man in Christ, whom I know, caught up,*" etc. (xii. 2). The salutation chapter which closes the Epistle to the Romans is fairly studded with the equivalent phrases: "*in the Lord,*" and "*in Christ.*" Aquila and Priscilla are "*helpers in Christ.*" Apollos is "*approved in Christ,*"—a character portrait in three strokes. And with a kind of holy envy he sends greetings to some who "*were in Christ before*" him, Christians of longer standing than even himself. Ask Paul, "What makes a Christian?" Baptism? True, that as between a Jewish child, or heathen, or Mahometan, and a "Christian," a very real, and a very blessed, distinction has been made in that water has been applied to this last in the name of the Trinity. The Lord's Supper? True, that it is the rallying place of all who "*hold the Head*" (Col. ii. 19), the spot where, in face of unbeliever and worldling, they avow their pledge to their Great, Divine Master, to hold Christian doctrine, and to live out the definitely Christian ethical code. All who gather there confess Christ. But the water may

be applied and no inward washing take place. There may be fatal divorce between belief of doctrine and faith in the Divine Centre and Summary of doctrine. The font, and the table, and the creed do not alone make a Christian. Ask Paul. "*To be in Christ*" would be his unvaryingly consistent answer, the condition assumed in all his letters and talk. 2. How much is meant by the phrase? (1) Men say of a David and Jonathan friendship, that each lives *in* the other. Indeed, "living in another" is one definition of Love. Take Jonathan from David, and to David it is all but death. Each fills the other's thoughts during their days of separation. David is in thought with Jonathan at court. Jonathan is ever picturing the life which his friend David is just at that given moment living, in the wilderness or the cave. *All true of Christ and the man "in Christ."* But is that all? (2) Take two friends, of one of whom the whole temperament is to be dependent. He is distrustful of his own judgment, to a fault; it leads to indecision and inaction. He has that shrinking from conflict which some wrongly confound with cowardice; and is moreover conscious of his own want of strength for any struggle with opponents or difficulties of circumstance. But he has a friend who is, and has, all that his weakness needs. He is wise and bold and self-reliant, and on him he leans. With him near by to apply to for counsel, to decide for his indecision, to stand by him in conflict, he is another man. Now that he knows a stronger arm and a clearer judgment and a self-reliant sturdiness of character will be by him and behind him, to guide him, and to see him through, in his friend's company he will dare to attempt and will persistently and successfully carry through, even against the strongest opposition, what he would fear even to contemplate if he were alone. All blessedly *true again of the believer and his Lord.* But when he is exhorted to "*be strong in the Lord*, and in the power of His might" (Eph. vi. 10), or "to stand fast *in the Lord*," is that all? (3) No. All this is true, because much more is true. There is a closer union than that of thought, sympathy, dependence. More than even the strong metaphor, "The soul of Jonathan was *knit* unto the soul of David" (1 Sam. xviii. 1). No metaphorical union, no figurative oneness of life, but a unity, a unification, so real, so complete, that Paul exclaims: "I live no longer; Christ liveth in me." Paul is no independent, self-contained unit; he is but a member of the grand **unit**—"**Christ**." He keeps his individuality; that is abundantly clear. But Paul the member is merged *in* His life, Who is Head, and all in all. In fact, there is compressed into his phrase all the teaching of John xv. and 1 Cor. xii. All the Lord's teaching about the Vine, all Paul's own teaching about the Body, are packed away into this *binomial* of his devotional and theological notation, "*in Christ*." (4) Let *Christians* work up from the *name* Christian to the *thought* "*in Christ*." "Between Him yonder at court and you here in the wilderness, there is a close bond. But there is a closer. Between Him on the throne, and the humblest, weakest, most obscure Christian on earth, it is not simply association of the most intimate, it is union. Not the attachment of a follower; but the grafting of a branch. Not the approximation of a band of disciples gathered round the Master; each is one of many members living in Him, an active hand, a keen eye, a swift foot; strong, intelligent, laborious, in the strength of a life which is His as well as theirs. This Vine is not the Stem and Root alone, any more than it is Branches alone; but Stem, *and* Root, *and* Branches; this Body is not the Head alone, but Head *and* Members; so in a very real, almost bottomless sense, we say, 'Ye are nothing apart from Him, and He is not complete without you. You, *and* your fellow-Christians, *and* your Christ, are

the Church, the Christ.' All the rays of illustrative, of analogical, teaching are converged into a smaller but exce-sively brilliant focal spot: '*In Christ.*' (5) Let *believers* think of it, for all hangs upon their faith. They 'live *in* their faith *in* a Son of God who loved them,' etc. (Gal. ii. 30)." They did not simply believe Him, or *in* Him, or even *on* Him, with full recumbency of soul casting themselves upon His saving power. They believed *unto* and *into* Him (*e.g.* John iii. 18, 36). He accepted them, grafted them, into Himself. There is community of interests, of joys, sufferings, point of view and of *judgment*, because there is community of life. The life of the Spirit of Christ (1 Cor. iii. 17; Phil. i. 19), the very life of the *corporate Christ* Himself, stirs in them. So utterly new a thing is that, so entirely foreign to all the natural life and its possibilities, that if any man be thus in Christ he is a new creature.

II. **The consequence: "Old things are passed away," "all become new," "all of God."**—1. *The first phrase is pictorial.* Winter-time. Earth wrapped in winter garment of snow. It lies stretching away mile after mile, rounding off all roughness into graceful curves; revealing, or concealing, the prominences of the surface beneath, just as the face-cloth half conceals, half reveals, the face of the dead beneath. That snow is a face-cloth laid over the face of a dead earth. Seeds are there, but dormant. No sap stirring in trees or hedgerows; buds waiting their time. Cold winds sweep howling over the open country, as if to bite back any too adventurous growth. Death reigns. Death, indeed, with the seed of life in its bosom, but potential rather than actual. But God's south wind blows. Men rise some morning, and the pall is gone from the face. The snow has *passed away.* Sun shines; God "sends forth His breath," and in a day or two the black soil of the ploughed fields shows a delicate green "down" upon its face. Sap stirring; buds swelling, bursting; every tree and hedgerow arraying itself in the first tender greenness of spring. Winter has *passed away.* Those are not last year's buds, or sap, or verdure. We call spring-time a resurrection. Rather, *a new creation.* Finish the passage just quoted (Ps. civ. 30): "they are *created*, and Thou *renewest* the face of the earth." Old things have passed away; all things have become new; there is a new creation.

2. *No analogy holds good everywhere.*—This holds fairly well; it is one of God's own. "*Out* of Christ" is death. Happily, death with the "seeds of life" in it. The grace of Christ has so far availed for all men, that the utter spiritual death of a devil, with no hope or possibility of life, has never—as an *initial* stage of man's life [it may be the *final*]—been more than a necessary theological conception. "In Christ was life, and that life was the light of men," light "that lighteth"—in some degree—"every man, coming into the world" (John i. 4, 9). And thus even before Christ, and without a preacher, in even heathen hearts is hidden what may develop into the new creation. Nature is death, utter, total; this potential life is grace, only grace. The "breath of life" goes forth from God; the Spirit of God calls forth a new creature. The new sap stirs in the system; the new buddings, from which will grow the developed "fruit of the Spirit" [N.B. "*works* of the flesh"; "*fruit*—not *fruits*—of the Spirit" (Gal. v. 19, 22)] begin to appear. There is life, new life, a new kind of life, everywhere and in everything. [Wife finds she has a new husband. The master a new servant. The man has new haunts, and pleasures, and company. New class of books and literature come upon the table. New point of view from which men and conduct are judged; new direction to his own life—Godward now—and a new way of looking at other men's lives. *New view and estimate of Christ,*—the point here. "If you don't believe I am converted, ask my wife!" Child, known to H. J. F.,

said, "Why, I feel as if I were *somebody else*!"]

3. *Science creates nothing.*—In nature God now ordinarily creates nothing. In His seventh day He rested from His work, and has probably since then only upheld and maintained the life and order then established. [This is a matter of evidence in any given case of an apparent miracle of creation. *E.g.* the multiplying of the bread for the five thousand.] The nearest approach to a true creation with which we are now made familiar is the bringing of a new, infant life into the world. The new-born babe is perhaps a new creation; its life (ζωή) a real addition to the sum of existence. Certainly the new man "*in Christ*" is a new thing on the face of God's earth; a distinctly new product of God's own power. A Christian *knows* that no evolution-formula embraces all the facts of life. It is not true of his life "*in Christ.*" There is more evolved than was even potentially contained in the old. In the man that came from fallen Adam, there was nothing from which the new man in the second Adam could be formed. New in time. New in kind.

4. *Note,* "*new,*" *not perfect or mature.*—The Christian does not leap forth, Minerva-like, full-grown at the first instant. The members of the natural body possess from the first all their characteristic aptitudes and powers, but they need training. The eye needs to learn how to see, as certainly as foot or hand need to learn to do their work. The foot is made to support the body; it alone can do it; but it must learn to do it. The newly opened leaf lives, but must unfold into maturity and perfection. Spring's new creation does not mean leaf or flower or fruit perfect at once. The analogy holds fairly well of the "*new*" life of the man "*in Christ.*" Quickened into "newness of life" (Rom. vi. 4), because the Holy Spirit has entered into and dwells in him. New powers, new faculties, suited to a new world (see on 1 Cor. ii. 12-16, Homiletic Analysis); new tastes, motives, work. All *new*, but with the weakness and inexperience of infancy, with only the tender strength of the natural growths of Spring.

[5. *What an illustration is Paul himself of all this.*—His affections no longer those of the natural man. (1) Joy is "*in the Holy Ghost,*" or "*in the Lord*" (Rom. xiv. 17; Phil. iv. 10). His love is no mere natural affection; but sublimated, spiritualised "*love in the Spirit,*" a thing originating in God Himself (Col. i. 8). He craves to see his Philippian friends, but with no merely natural longing; he "longs after them all *in the bowels of Jesus Christ*" (Phil. i. 18). It is Christ's own love for them stirring in Paul. The throbs of feeling which pulsate through his heart have their centre of origin in Christ Himself. (2) The impulses and determinations of his will are the outflow of a force which originates in another. Plans, purposes,—none are independent of Christ. He "trusts *in the Lord* to send Timothy" (Phil. ii. 19). (3) His intellect obeys new laws; he is "persuaded *in the Lord Jesus,*" etc. (Rom. xiv. 14). He has not arrived at the conclusion by the exercise of unassisted human judgment. The indwelling life of Christ makes it Christ's judgment too. (4) Even old points of character and conduct have now a new root and motive. We may suppose him to have been always truthful and honourable (Acts xxiii. 1). But he does not speak "on his honour," or as a truthful man; he "speaks the truth *in Christ*" (Rom. ix. 1). As now a member of Him Who is the Truth, with Whom falsehood cannot even in thought be associated, Paul's word must now be the simple truth, the highest form of asseveration. (5) This verse (ver. 17) a case in point. Men accused Paul of want of straightforwardness; of mercenary motives; of blustering when absent, and speaking very humbly when present; of fearing to come to Corinth. The natural heart meets such charges with appeals to a man's honour, or with indignant or angry repudiation. He quietly says: "We are manifest to God. Other motives

altogether now rule us. We do not now regard men, their threats, their favour, in that way. We live, judge, plan, feel, speak, as new creatures, because in Christ. Even our view and knowledge and estimate of Himself are now new." Between Saul of Tarsus and Paul the Apostle there lies an act of Divine power, there is a new creation. He is a new creature. His life is a new life in all its manifestations.] ". . . Those of us whose infancy was sheltered from contamination, whose childhood was nurtured in holy doctrine and encouraged by saintly and sweet example, whose youth was watched by a vigilant ministry of inspection and loving solicitude, and yet the evil of whose nature, and the ungodliness of whose bias, received no effectual check. We respected the restraints of authority and family honour, and, it may be, conveyed a mistaken impression of the moral side of our life. But we knew that in spite of home and Church the heart within us was unchanged; and when the change did come, it was not through any fact or word we did not know before, it was as if a new sense had been uncovered; God and Christ and heaven and hell, instead of being images flitting through the mind, were entities; we lived in a new world; we walked by faith, and not by sight; life and death, and duty had each a new meaning; and above all and beyond all other revelations there was an indwelling Christ, redeeming a condemned sinner from guilt and saving a struggling soul from defeat. . . . This change was no more wrought by man than the heavens were created by man." ["And all things are of God."]—*From address by Rev. E. E. Jenkins, D.D.*

Ver. 20. "*The ministry of reconciliation.*"

I. Must go to political world for illustration of **The Arrangement**, "*We beseech you in Christ's stead.*" 1. (1) Queen frequently gives assent to bills *by commission.* Lord Chancellor, with other noble lords, in due form and state appear—*as she would*—and signify her assent—*as she would,*—the quaint Norman-French formula being used, just as if she were personally present and acting. The *Lord Chancellor and his companion-commissioners are,* for the time and the special purpose, *the Queen.* (2) In the old, picturesque days of English history there was a great officer of state, of much importance in the Government—the Lord High Treasurer. There has been no Lord High Treasurer since Shrewsbury resigned his office at the accession of George I. The office is "*in commission.*" The duties are discharged by commissioners: a First Lord of the Treasury and several Junior Lords. *They together are the Lord High Treasurer of olden days.* (3) William IV., as Duke of Clarence, was the last Lord High Admiral. The office is in commission. *First Lord and Junior Lords of the Admiralty are in effect to-day* the Lord High Admiral, holding his office, doing his work. 2. Once there dwelt on earth a **Great Ambassador.** He is back at Court to-day. *His office* has been *in commission* ever since He said, "Go ye; make disciples of all the nations." That was the issue of the patent, the writ, constituting the commissioners. Paul is (to speak in the political dialect) First Lord of the Ambassadorship. The ministry of the Churches are his fellow-commissioners for executing the office of the Great Ambassador. *Paul and his colleagues and successors are together the Great Ambassador.* In their collective voice His voice is heard. He pleads with men individually *in them.* "*We pray you,*" yet not on our own account; *on His*—"*in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled.*" 3. [(1) *Congregation may help ministers to remember this.* For one thing, the ministry is recruited from the congregation; the sons will bring with them into the sacred office the habitual ideas, canons of judgment, whole estimate of the homes and circles from which they are drawn. Also, it is not unworthy of most faithful minister

to feel that, if he knows that the ambassador's evangelical earnestness is expected, respected, by his people, he will find it easier to cultivate and show it. If he knows that they never pray for him as an ambassador from God to guilty, alienated men—that they are impatient, intolerant, of such zeal as becomes his office—he will still of course be faithful to his commission; but they will create an added difficulty, where already there are many attaching to fidelity and success. The people should pray for, listen to, him; should train children, not to criticise, but to pray for and listen to him; as one who is speaking and appealing only in the name of the Great Ambassador. With what earnestness would the Great Ambassador Himself plead!] (2) Within the Church, ministers are "*those who bear rule over you, who watch for your souls as those that must give an account*" (Heb. xiii. 17); to the Flock they are "*shepherds*" (Eph. iv. 11). But to those outside the fold, the family, the kingdom, the Church, they are "*ambassadors for Christ.*" Christ has given to them a ministry of discipline, of instruction; but, first in order, a "*ministry of reconciliation.*"

II. "**Reconciled.**"—1. What is the matter between God and man? Do men misunderstand God? More. Indifferent to His love and claims? More. Alienated from Him? Yes. "*The mind of the flesh is enmity against God*" (Rom. viii. 7). James says, bluntly, sternly, "*Whosoever will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God*" (Jas. iv. 4). Terrible words! And, on the other side, "*the wrath of God.*" Often in so many words. But it lies in the gracious word "*propitiation.*" A Propitiation is nothing but a gift which appeases and turns away displeasure. [David's Philistine comrades would not have him to go to battle with them to Gilboa (1 Sam. xxix. 4). They feared his treachery. "Wherewith should he reconcile himself to his master, Saul? Should it not be with our heads?" With such slain trophies should he propitiate his king, and pave the way for reconciliation.] If "Propitiation be a true [though by no means the complete or only] representation of the meaning and effect of the death of Christ, there must have been that to turn away which is best expressed to us by the human word "wrath." "*We ambassadors have peace with God.*" [Or, "*Let us have*" (Rom. v. 1). In either case it is *a peace of relation, not of feeling.*] "*When we were enemies, we were reconciled,*" etc. Then they who are not yet reconciled are——? Such words all speak of war, "enmity," antagonism. 2. The very ambassadors know, in themselves, that it is *nature* to sin, but *grace* to deny and crucify self and "the flesh"; that it is easy to drift from God, but means conflict and struggle to keep by His side; easier to be slack than diligent; easier—and quite natural—to be worldly than godly. Nothing more wonderful, or more significant, than to see with what terrible facility a once godly man may drop out from good ways and let go the religious habits of a lifetime; no long interval is required for a foremost, genuine "worker" to become a merely formal, perfunctory Church member; one day of careless walking will cost a Christian man what weeks of struggle and prayer will not recover for him. [No trouble to grow weeds; much pains to grow flowers or fruit. Natural facts illustrate the spiritual: get *twice* the distance from the centre of light and heat, and the light and heat are diminished *fourfold*; a falling body drops with rapidly accelerating velocity, in the second second covering three times the space covered in the first, in the third five times the distance, and so on. These are also rules obtaining when a soul departs from its Centre, or falls into sin.] Such facts mean that religion is not natural, but of grace. All disposition towards God has come from without. "*We* (ambassadors) *were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.*" 3. Men know themselves; that they do not love religion,—not merely this or that unfortunate presentation of it, in persons or

Churches, but the abiding, constant life of fellowship with God; that there is a real *aversion* from God—latent, dormant, disguised, so long as no occasion for its awakening or display, but capable of being aroused; that prayer is really infrequent or uninviting, the Bible unattractive. Men know the significance of these facts: that the conversion of wife or son or daughter would not be most welcome news; that to have Christ and His claims pressed with any urgency, arouses resistance, or even a real anger which may sweep away all perfectly trained, native politeness. [*Mr. Gladstone told Mr. Stead* (*Review of Reviews*, April 1892): "Lord Melbourne was one day seen coming from church in the country in a mighty fume. Finding a friend, he exclaimed: 'It is too bad. I have always been a supporter of the Church, and I have always upheld the clergy; but it is really too bad to have to listen to a sermon like that we have had this morning. Why, the preacher actually insisted upon applying religion to a man's private life.'"] [Two friends sitting silently smoking by the side of a Scotch burn, in the quiet evening, after a day's hard fishing. One breaks the silence: "Let us get up and go. I cannot stand this. *It makes me think of God.*" (Case known to H. J. F.)] Friends may be of any creed, of any religion, except "spiritual" religion; such unwelcome. Between the pleasures men like, and the religion which claims the men, nobody more than the man of the world feels how deep a gulf is cleft. "*Ni Dieu, ni maître*," "Our enemy is God," are only extreme manifestations of what every man knows is a capability in himself. Think of the meaning of persecution, ecclesiastical or (not less significant) domestic. Good men know that there is no distance from God to which they might not go, no depth to which they might not sink, no enmity to Him of which they would not be capable, if the Spirit of God were withdrawn, and themselves left to the power of temptation. The relations between God and men out of joint. Men out of harmony with Him; He arrayed against them in holy "wrath." "*Be ye reconciled.*"

III. "**He** [needed to be, and] **is, reconciled.**"—1. "*God was in Christ reconciling*," etc. Can date the death on Calvary; but cannot date the Reconciliation in Christ. Assumed and acted upon from Eden to Calvary, whilst as yet there was no Calvary; in the mind and heart of God "*from times eternal.*" As such words are suggested, they lead to a point where we gaze out into hopeless depths of unfathomable mystery. [Revolt alleged against doctrine of "wrath of God" and the "total" ruin of "fallen man." Always has been something of such revolt. Further, if "Puritan" theology and preaching did draw portrait of an angry God and of guilty, helpless, God-hating, born sinner,—both in too hard lines,—let this extenuate their "fault": the holier a man grows, the more deeply he understands the intense antagonism between holiness and sin, God and a sinful heart; the more deeply does he realise that stern, *active*, *almighty* wrath against sin is a necessity of the very nature of a holy God; he reads Bible with the light gained in a lifetime, and with the instincts of a holy heart. Nobody sterner than was John in the ripeness of age, knowledge, character. It only needs that the Puritan portrait be (not essentially altered, but the hard lines) softened, and the whole suffused, with the tender glory of the redeeming grace of a God in Christ Who "*reconciled the world to Himself.*"] As matter of happy fact there never has been a *mere* sinner; some good has been present from the first, because some grace has been given from the first. Happily, also, men never have to do with the *mere* wrath of God; never have known any God but *the God of grace*, on His part reconciled in Christ, and waiting for men to be reconciled. [Wellington and Soult fought at Toulouse (April 1814), in ignorance that an armistice had been signed at Paris.

English sailors fought at New Orleans (January 1815), in ignorance that Treaty of Ghent had already been signed between England and United States. So] men are fighting on against a reconciled God, most of them in heart ignorance.

Ver. 21. *Reconciliation by the Sinless Substitute.*

I. **The Substitute.**—No need to be ashamed of the doctrine of a *vicarious* Atonement. It has suffered much at the hands of its friends; it has been crudely presented, and in an untrue isolation of exhibition, without any suggestion of other complementary, guarding aspects of the meaning of the Death. In the endeavour to give it such clear, vivid exposition as may enable the untrained mind of the young, the ignorant, the heathen, to apprehend it for the comfort and rest of their heart and conscience, it has perhaps been almost caricatured. Yet granting true all the hardest things which have been said of it, and of those who preached it—they have not always been fair and true—yet there lies beneath it a deep-seated instinct of the human heart—the instinct of Atonement by Substitution. The doctrine has been ridiculed, but it has survived the ridicule; it has more than the proverbial "nine lives." It has been denounced as unreasonable, immoral. [Yet an ancient sage saw, "Volenti non fit injuria"; see also Appended Note.] If it has been deemed slain and cast out in argument, yet it has had a wonderful resurrection power. Its enemies have sealed the stone and set the watch, but it has always come forth in perennial life. The instinct of substitution is rooted in all hearts, in all ages, in all religions. Even the base Caiaphas could say, with selfish policy—though like other prophets, far better men, there was more in his words than he knew (1 Pet. i. 11, 12),—"It is expedient that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not" (John xi. 50). It is not the result of a theological training, or even the formative influence of a Jewish sacrificial system, which makes Paul almost Christlike in his love for his nation, as in "great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart," he almost volunteers his own ruin, if only it might be accepted to avert the eternal fulfilment of the *anathema* which hung over the Israel which would not "love the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. ix. 2, 3). "If my damnation would accomplish their salvation——"; it is a daringly tremendous conception, but it is the instinct of a true human heart. He had been anticipated long before (Exod. xxxii. 32). Moses the Mediator begins to ask for pardon, but his sentence hangs in mid-utterance unfinished, as if the enormity of the people's guilt came upon him, choking back the request for pardon. And then, as the river is dammed up only to burst forward with redoubled volume and force, there breaks out from his heart a yet more daring request. He had halted in the very midst of his intercession a moment ago; now his instinct of self-sacrificing love for his people makes a bolder leap than before: "If not—if mere and simple forgiveness be not possible, blot me, I pray Thee, out," etc. It was the nearest approach any man ever made to Ps. xl. 7, 8. The offer could not be accepted. It could have availed nothing if it had been accepted. Still, to Moses the Mediator belongs the honour of being in the ages before Christ the one man who had volunteered to die to save his brethren, the guilty Israel. But that honour was reserved for the One Mediator only. Let any man read these words to a dying man, who must have the Gospel in a small compass, and that quickly; let him "explain" them to a company of children, or to a group of degraded, drunken men or women;—they will feel, he will feel—perhaps in spite of theological predispositions—that no other thought than a substitution is here [as in Gal. iii. 13] natural. No other reading will be of any practical service to him, or of any ready practical

help to the clamorous conscience and the burdened heart.

II. **A Sinless Substitute.**—1. *The sinlessness of Jesus makes Him solitary amongst His brethren* whose humanity He wore. Yet apologists rightly urge the fact, and its forceful value, as leading up to a belief in His Godhead, that He alone of all the noblest moral leaders of our race, never betrays any consciousness of such internal discord as makes many noblest lives bitter almost beyond bearing; or of any such discrepancy between His own moral standard, as He sets it before Himself or exhibits it to others, and the fact of His life; he never seems to need to distinguish between the official utterance and the personal performance. His teaching is highest, and He apparently *is* all He teaches. He never, though His life is prayer, prays for forgiveness. Not a word of moral regret, not a moment's confession of the slightest moral failure, ever escapes Him or is volunteered. No suspicion of pride is possible, yet He moves in and out amongst His fellows, and lifts up His confident face to His father, without a trace of misgiving because of sin. No room to suspect any dulness of spiritual apprehension or perception; the sense of sin is always keenest in the holiest. There are no critics of themselves like the saints of God. [When the glare and glamour of the world are withdrawn, as in days of solitude, or of sanctified sickness or trouble, the soul's eye sees a whole firmamentful of sins, which were indeed there all the time, but unseen and unsuspected. And as the astronomer's eye grows more sensitive by practice, and sees what it could not when it began to observe, so is there no surer sign of growth in the grace of holiness than that the eye of the soul is becoming more sensitive to discover sin where in earlier days it condemned, because it saw—nothing.] The closer a man is drawn to God, the more intimate and habitual the fellowship which God vouchsafes to him, the keener the sense of unworthiness and imperfection.

> "Eternal Light, Eternal Light,
> How pure that soul must be
> When, placed within Thy searching sight,
> It shrinks not, but with calm delight
> Can live and look on Thee."

So sang Thomas Binney. But *can* any soul? This One Soul did; the **Sinless Substitute.**

2. *Scripture assumes this of Him.*—Heb. iv. 15 is typical in its pointed exception of Him. Peter had known Him as intimately as any one, except perhaps John. Our friends know us, and they know us not faultless. A *sine quâ non* of most friendship to choose not to see everything. Grace does produce noble characters. John Wesley wrote of John Fletcher: "I was intimately acquainted with him for above thirty years; I conversed with him morning, noon, and night, without the least reserve, during a journey of many hundred miles; and in all that time I never heard him speak one improper word, nor saw him do an improper action. Many exemplary men have I known, holy in heart and life within fourscore years, but one equal to him have I not known,—one so inwardly and outwardly devoted to God." (Wesley, *Works*, vii. 449.) Yet who does not feel, when Peter says, "Who *did* no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (1 Pet. ii. 22), that we have a testimony to a holiness of another order, and of a higher degree of completeness? It is not merely Peter's observation of the three memorable years of the ministry; it is the Spirit's witness for the three-and-thirty years of the incarnate life on earth. If to those who know us best our outward life seems blameless, in our heart we say, "They don't know me as I know myself." [The world does not understand this. Lady Huntingdon profusely, earnestly declared herself to Lord Chesterfield "a great sinner." Said he, with polished sarcasm, rising as if to leave the room, "Excuse me, madam, but I am not accustomed to keep such bad company."] [F. W. Newman's remarks in Liddon. See Appended Note.] We know little of James; what we know

is saintly, of an ascetic pattern of saintliness. Yet no one would credit an assertion of sinlessness, if made concerning James. "No; he is only a man." Blamelessness is far less than Sinlessness, and blamelessness is a question of the human limitation of requirement and knowledge. Paul here much stronger: "*Knew no sin.*" That man knows nothing of himself who does not know that he "knows sin." The ripening holiness of a Christian man passes through a stage when, though all torturing sense of guilt and fear is gone, there is an intense sensitiveness of pain at the cleaving, clinging, defiling presence of sin within. The loathing of himself by the man longing for holiness is very deep; a well-ascertained fact of universal religious experience. "Universal," but not including Him. He knew none. There came early to our race "a knowledge of good—*and of evil.*" And men know it, as men know the very sphere within whose round and range their life is spent. But it had never included Him. The Tempter sought to avail himself of the natural, neutral, innocent hunger after a long fast, and of the neutral, innocent, useful instinct to avoid pain; there was nothing else he could appeal to. These, he found, were not in Christ under any law but that of the most perfect self-surrender to do the whole will of God His Father; and apart from these "he had nothing in" Christ on which to begin his evil work (John xiv. 30). One of the necessary preliminaries of the Passover Sacrifice in the time of Christ had become the presentation of the lambs for inspection by duly appointed Levitical officers. The Temple court was full of lambs and their offerers. One of the many suggestions of the Transfiguration scene takes up that point. It is plain that about that time the mind of the Saviour was full of Calvary and its sacrifice, some twelve months forward (Luke ix. 31). Cæsarea Philippi was, in other senses as well as the geographical, the farthest limit of His journeyings. Literally, from that time onwards His life was one long "going up to Jerusalem." From that time God's Passover Lamb went slowly forward to death. And on the Mount the Father formally and solemnly inspected His "Lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. i. 19; Exod. xii. 5). It was faultless. "My beloved, . . . in Whom I am well pleased."

3. Thus then the Substitute stands forth "apart from sin," and apart from us; unique in an unapproachable holiness. In us holiness is induced; in Him inherent. In us all grace; in Him all nature. In us a deep moral discord and a paralysing moral schism; in Him peace. [Cf. "*My* peace I give unto you"; in its measure fulfilled in the Sanctifying work of the Spirit (John xiv. 27). The "God *of peace*" is the Sanctifier to Whom Paul appeals (1 Thess. v. 23).] His communion with God was with an unclouded vision; so may ours be, but with a difference. Behind Him is no memory of days when sin hid that Face. May it be said that the inscrutable anguish of a Father's hidden Face, upon the cross, was the harder to bear that He had never had even an instant's experience of interrupted communion until that moment? Our highest holiness is a repaired ruin; His never knew the beginning of a fault. [The priceless Portland Vase in the British Museum was once dashed into fragments by a madman. With great patience and skill, every fragment, down to the tiniest, was recovered and all were put together. *The vase stands to-day complete*; but, like our highest holiness, is *with the completeness of a restoration.*] His had always, and at Calvary, the completeness of what had never known a flaw, the completeness of an original unviolated, Divine integrity. His holiness is manifested in all ordinary forms of human life; but it is a Divine holiness which chooses those forms for its manifestation. Our holiness is relative, and we ourselves are accepted as holy, only according to a standard of requirement tempered by Evangelical grace; His holiness is absolute. Our

strength for holy living and for victorious conflict with evil is outside ourselves—in Him; He bore Himself in the wilderness and the world with the calm of self-sufficing strength within. ["To serve the present age" a man must belong to it; yet he must be before it, above it, if he is to lift it. So] to save our race its Saviour must belong to it. He did "take hold on the seed of Abraham" (Heb. ii.). To save our race He must be above it. The uniqueness, the isolation, of the holiness of our Substitute is the very prime necessity of His work.

III. **The salvation through Him.**—1. Two points of exposition to be noticed: (1) "*Sin*," *not* "*a sin offering*"; a possible meaning indeed, favoured by Augustine, and from him downward; but not satisfying the antithesis to "*righteousness.*" The abstract words are noteworthy. As though almost—for one thing—God were viewed as dealing with Qualities rather than with Personalities. The Substitute steps into the place of sinners, indeed; but also He is, as it were, made Sin Embodied. The holy wrath and necessary, active antagonism between His holiness and all moral evil is all converging upon one point. We—I—ought to have stood there, on that spot of terrible convergence. What does occupy the place? His Son? Yes. But going more deeply—"Sin." Our race, perhaps the other races of the universe, are seeing, in a fearful object-lesson, Holiness spending its stern strength upon Sin. (2) Note the difference: "*Made . . .* **for** *us*," "*Righteousness* **in** *Him.*" *The forensic and the mystical theories* of the Atoning work of Christ *meet here.* There is the honour done to the majesty, the supremacy, the very principle of moral Law, when He, Who is the Lawgiver, steps into the place of the lawbreakers, and outraged Law is avenged upon Him Who never broke it. There is the honour done to real Righteousness. The Salvation were not complete if only penalty were turned aside, law satisfied, the sinner suffered to go free. There is no real salvation which does not work out a real "*righteousness*," and that manifestly "*of God.*" This also is given for His sake, certainly; but only in connection with that living, life-giving union which fills Paul's phrases "in Christ," "in the Lord." ["When St. Paul says *that we might be made*, etc., the word γινώμεθα means more than the non-imputation of sin which has been spoken of before. *That we might become*: our forensic justification being included of necessity, our moral conformity to the Divine righteousness cannot be excluded. Those closing words are a resumption, but in a more emphatic and enlarged form, of the preceding paragraph, which ended with *in Christ . . . a new creature. The righteousness of God in Him* is the full realisation of the new method of conforming us to His attribute of righteousness. It is impossible to establish the distinction between **in Christ** for external righteousness and **Christ in us** for righteousness internal. These are only different aspects of one and the same union with Christ. Still, the distinction may be used for illustration."] 2. Let it be remembered that this is God's way of "*reconciliation*"; that all God designed and desired is not accomplished when the Substitute has stood and suffered where the Sinner and his Son should have stood: to be "*in Christ*" is part of God's whole work and purpose. There is no true "salvation" unless there is a real righteousness flowing, growing, from a real union with Him. He cast in His lot with us; we must have a life grafted into His. Then at last the broken order is readjusted. Then indeed

> "Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
> God and sinners reconciled."
>
> "Glory to God in the highest!"

## HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.

Vers. 1-5. *Our Present and Future Houses.*

I. **The present house.**—*The physical structure.* Mind occupies body. This house is: 1. *Earthly.* Consequently drags the tenant down to earth. 2. *Movable.* A tent, rather than a house. And how easily and quickly removable! How frail while it lasts! 3. *Decaying.* Gradually growing old, decomposing, ceaselessly returning to earth. 4. *Inconvenient.* "In it we groan, being burdened." 5. *Inferior.* Paul desires a *better.*

II. **The future house.**—*The resurrection body.* Described in 1 Cor. xv. This house is: 1. *Superhuman.* "Not made with hands." Jehovah the Architect and Builder. So was this first, but it has evidently been tampered with; and was not meant for permanence. 2. *Eternal.* 3. *Unexposed* to the storms of earth. "In the heavens," where all will contribute to its constant preservation and increasing adornment. 4. *Attractive.* Paul craves this. 5. *The tenant is being prepared for it.* "Wrought for this selfsame thing." 6. *He has the assurance of it.* "The earnest of the Spirit." Have you such a house in prospect?—*More fully in "Homilist," Third Series,* iii. 33.

Vers. 8-10. *The Philosophy of True Courage.*—Paul's *courage* is *based on three convictions*; that **Death will not endanger**—

I. **The interests of being.**

II. **The great purpose of being.**

III. **The rewards of being.**—*Homilist,* iv. 107.

Ver. 10. *Christ's Great Assize.* **Five watchwords** sum up the principles of the Judgment.

I. **Test**; applied according to varying measures of probationary privilege.

II. **Revelation of character.**—["*Appear*" is not only *comparaître,* "present ourselves before." It is also be "made manifest." No man knows himself "as he is known," until that day.]

III. **Separation of classes.**

IV. **Execution of the condemning sentence.**—"There can be no doubt that the term 'judgment' is most frequently connected with condemnation; this, in fact, is the more common meaning of κρίσις. *Judgment* determining the sentence; *condemnation* pronouncing it; execution administering it; are almost synonymous terms with regard to the wicked; in Scripture, as in the common language of human justice."

V. **Confirmation or ratification of the acceptance of the saved.**—*See this suggestively filled up in Pope, "Compend. of Theol.,"* 416 *sqq.*

Ver. 14. "The words are: 'The love of Christ constrains us, because this is our interpretation of it: [Denny says, *antea,* p. 106, "The work of Christ in relation to sin is not a naked fact, an impenetrable unintelligible fact; it is in the New Testament a luminous, interpretable, and interpreted fact. . . . Says St. Paul, We thus judge; *i.e.* . . . we can and do put a certain intellectual construction upon it."] One died for all; so then all died.' Battles have been fought here over the preposition 'for,' which is ὑπέρ, on behalf of, not ἀντί, instead of. This, it has been said, excludes the idea of substitution. This is a hasty inference. Paul might very well wish to say that Christ died on our behalf, without, so far as the preposition goes, thinking *how* it was that Christ's death was to be an advantage to us. But observe the inference he draws: One died for all; so then all died. That is to say, His death is as good as theirs. That is *why* His death is an advantage to them; that is what rationally connects it with their benefit: it is a death which is really theirs; it is *their* death which has been died by *Him.* If any

one denies this, it rests with him to explain, in the first place, how Christ's death advantages us at all; and, in the second place, how Paul can draw from Christ's death the immediate inference, 'so then all *died*.' We do not need to fight about the prepositions. Christ's death benefits us, we are all agreed, whatever be the preposition used to express its relation to us, or to our sins, or to our good; but there is no coherence between the Apostle's premises and his conclusion, except on the assumption that that death of Christ was really our death, which had come upon Him. It is on this deeper connection that all the advantages to us of that death depend. This interpretation is confirmed when we turn to the last verse of this chapter, which is virtually the Apostle's own comment on ver. 14: 'Him that knew no sin God made sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.' We sometimes hear the New Testament doctrine of the atonement objected to, on the ground of the contradictions it involves. I do not think the objection is very serious. St. Paul, when he wrote this sentence, had them all in his mind, logical and ethical, in their acutest form. He probably felt, as most people feel when redemption from sin becomes a practical interest to them, that the point at which God comes into contact with sin, even as a Redeemer, *must* involve contradictions of every kind: for it means that God is taking part with us against Himself. That in the atoning work a sinless One is made sin, and sinful ones become the righteousness of God, is not a *primâ facie* objection to the work in question; it is the very condition under which alone the work can be carried through. Paul condenses in this proposition, not only the infinite difficulties of the question, but its adequate solution; it is in these sharp, undisguised contradictions—if you like to say so, it is in this tragic, appalling event, the sinless One made sin *by God*—that the condemned soul recognises the very stamp and seal of a real work of atonement. That meeting of contradictories, that union of logical and moral opposites, is here the very guarantee of truth. . . . The idea underlying [the passage] is plainly that of an interchange of states. Christ is the Person who knew no sin; *i.e.* to whose conscience and will, though He confronted it all His life, sin remained an absolutely alien thing. The negative μή means that this is conceived as the judgment of another upon Christ; it is conceived as the judgment of God. He it is to whom Christ is sinless. As He looks down from Heaven, He sees *Him alone*, among the children of men, free from evil, and therefore free from condemnation. He alone is absolutely good, the beloved with whom the Father is well pleased. Yet Him God made sin, that by so doing He might destroy sin, and have the good news of reconciliation to proclaim to men. What is it, then, that this making sin covers? What are we to understand by it? It means precisely what is meant in the verse already quoted: that Christ died for us, died that death of ours which is the wages of sin. In His death, all sinless as He was, God's condemnation of our sin came upon Him; a Divine sentence was executed upon the sin of the world. It is all-important to observe that it was *God* who made Christ sin; the passage is habitually quoted 'He became sin,' or, indefinitely, 'He was made sin,' in a vague sense unconsciously willing to leave God out; and then the mind goes off at a tangent, and seeks moralising or rationalising senses in which such an expression might be used. But God is the subject of the sentence: it is God who is presented dealing in an awful way with the awful reality of sin, for its removal; and the way in which He removes it is to lay it on His Son. That is done, not in anything else, but in this alone, that Christ, by God's appointment, dies the sinner's death. The doom falls upon Him, and is exhausted there. The sense of the Apostle is given adequately in the well-known hymn:

" 'Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
*In my place condemned He stood;*
Sealed my pardon with His blood:
Hallelujah.'"
—*Dr. Denny,* "*Studies in Theology,*" pp. 109-112.

Ver. 17. May be crystallised around four, all true, ways of reading this *gnomic* sentence.

I. If in Christ, there must follow a new creation.

II. As soon as in Christ, there begins a new creation.

III. So long as in Christ, there abides, and develops, a new creation.

IV. Because there is manifestly a new creation, therefore certainly the man is in Christ.

N.B.—Nothing less than a new *creation* will do. The water may open the bud into flower, but it cannot form the bud. It can give *culture*, but not *life*.

N.B.—Case analogous as between Gen. i. and this: 1. "In beginning God created," etc. 2. Spirit brooding. 3. Light. 4. Order. 5. Rest (Heb. iv. 7).

## *APPENDED NOTES.*

Ver. 14. "*Then all died.*" — There is another way in which the Death of our Lord Jesus Christ is related to our redemption. I approach it with great hesitation, because it is involved in great obscurity. . . . These words (viz. ver. 14), if they stood alone, might perhaps be fairly regarded as a strong rhetorical statement of the effect which ought to be produced upon our hearts by the infinite love of Christ in dying for us. It might be said that, since He died for us, the greatness of His love ought to dissolve all our relations to this present "evil world," and bind us in perfect and eternal loyalty to Himself; that we ought to live as though death had already separated us from the common excitements and sorrows and triumphs of mankind; for us old things should have passed away, and all things become new. But in several other of his Epistles he speaks of Christ's Death as though it were a real event in our own history. In the Epistle to the Romans (vi., vii.) he rests his elaborate arguments on what he takes for granted as known to those to whom he is writing,—the fact that Christ's death was in some sense their own death. . . . The conception . . . reappears . . . in St. Paul's writings . . . so frequently, and in such forms, that it cannot be treated as being nothing more than a rhetorical representation of the great moral effect which our belief in the Death of Christ ought to have on our spirit and character. It seems to have suggested the exhortation of St. Peter, to which it is difficult to give a very exact interpretation, "Forasmuch then," etc. (2 Pet. iv. 1, 2). In his Epistle to the Galatians St. Paul affirms that he himself had thus died in Christ (Gal. ii. 20). And many Christian persons have declared that they are conscious that in the Death of Christ their old and evil life perished. It is far less difficult to apprehend the fact that we live in the life of Christ than the fact that we died in His death; but the teaching of St. Paul seems to be explicit. The destruction of evil within us is the effect and fulfilment in ourselves of the mystery of Christ's Death, as the development of our positive holiness is of the power of His life. This is the Pauline doctrine, and I repeat that it has been verified in the consciousness of large numbers of Christian people. I accept this relation between the Death of Christ and the death of our own evil self as a fact, though I may be unable to offer any explanation of it. The fact, however inexplicable, is of great significance. . . . How many of us have cried, in the bitterness of our despair, "There is no redemption possible to us. We have waited for God, and He has not come to us. . . . Would to God that I could cease to be myself; that this evil nature of mine could be destroyed and leave nothing of itself behind; that I could die, if only I might have a new life, with better instincts, diviner impulses—that the passion, the sluggishness, the selfishness, the unbelief, which seem to constitute my very self, could be smitten with lightning from heaven, and perish—perish utterly, and perish for ever." . . . The prayer receives its answer in Christ; in His Death our sin dies, and in His life the very life of God is made our own. How the Death of Christ effects the destruction of our sin we may be unable to tell. Perhaps that great moral act by which Christ consented to lose the consciousness of the Father's presence and love—an act different in kind from any to which holy beings, in their normal relation to God, can be called—rendered it possible for us to sink to that complete renunciation of self which is the condition of the perfect Christian life; for that renunciation is also unique, and has no parallel in the normal development of a moral creature. But it is enough that we know the fact that in God's idea, and according to the law of the

kingdom of heaven, we are crucified in Christ. Sometimes through our union with Him sin may seem to perish as by a sudden blow. More frequently it dies slowly—dies as those died who were put to death by crucifixion. . . . But it is actually crucified, if only our union with Christ is complete; and though it may still live, its power over us is gone. . . . [A] moral security for the disappearance of sin has been created by the sufferings of Christ on the cross. The Death of Christ is the death of sin.—*Dale*, "*Atonement*," pp. 425-430. Cf. also pp. 261, 262.

Ver. 14. "*Love of Christ constraineth me*" [if regarded as equivalent to "Love *to* Christ"].—The Duke of Wellington regarded himself as a "retained servant of the monarch." A customary phrase of his was, "The King's government must be carried on." Hence he sank personal differences and served under Peel, when Peel changed *re* Corn Laws. "Government is of far greater importance than any party opinions whatever." So "*Christ's government must be carried on*"!

*No lower, feebler motive is in long-run sufficient.* Dr. Hessey (Boyle Lectures, *Moral Difficulties of the Bible*) tells of a young man, in a newly founded colony, who went to a Bishop for ordination, professedly from the highest motives. The Bishop knew the young man, and, suspecting an admixture of lower motives (albeit hardly known to the man), sent him to a school for native children, miles up-country, to teach them everything. The test did its work. In two months the young man returned, owning he did not know his own heart fully, and no longer deeming the ministry his life-work.

Ver. 17. "*A new creature.*"—If any man be in Christ, that is a new creation. That is enough. Let but this miracle be wrought, and the spirit has not missed the true rapture of life. The outward order may be wearily and monotonously the same. Reforms may be driven back; injustices may be perpetuated; the day of external deliverance may be far off. It is a small thing, if the soul is unchained. The slave who believed was still a slave to outward seeming. His bondage, it might well be, was to grow yet more stringent and cruel, and no help would reach him on this side of death. But he was a new creation. He beheld all things with new eyes, inhabited by a new spirit. He was no more the sport of a merciless master, but one of the children whom God gave to Christ. Though no arm of rebellion was lifted to overthrow the tyranny that crushed him, he was delivered from his heartbroken weariness, and he could do all things and bear all things through Christ that strengthened him.—*Editorial*, "*British Weekly*," October 19th, 1893.

Ver. 21. "*Who knew no sin.*"—Yet Jesus Christ never once confesses sin; He never once asks for pardon. . . . He never Himself lets fall a hint, He Himself never breathes a prayer, which implies any, the slightest, trace of a personal remorse. From no casual admission do we gather that any, the most venial, sin had ever been His. Never for one moment does He associate Himself with any passing experience of that anxious dread of the penal future with which His own awful words must needs fill the sinner's heart. If His Soul is troubled, at least His moral sorrows are not His own; they are a burden laid on Him by His love for others. Nay, He challenges His enemies to convince Him of sin. He declares positively that He always does the will of the Father. Even when speaking of Himself as Man, He always refers to eternal life as His inalienable possession. It might, so perchance we think, be the illusion of a moral dulness, if only He did not penetrate the sin of others with such relentless analysis. It might, we imagine, be a subtle pride, if we did not know Him to be as unrivalled in His great humility. This consciousness of an absolute sinlessness in such a soul as that of Jesus Christ points to a moral elevation unknown to our human experience. It is, at the very least, suggestive of a relation to the Perfect Moral Being altogther unique in human history.—*Liddon*, "*Bampton Lectures*," iv. 1 (*a*). (The two paragraphs preceding, as well as the footnote from F. W. Newman, and Note C, will be full of serviceable suggestions to a homilist. Also if Luthardt, *Fundamental Truths*, be accessible, lect. x., pp. 311-313, is a good putting of the case.)

# CHAPTER VI.

## *CRITICAL NOTES.*

**This chapter wrongly isolated at both ends** by the customary division of the book. Connection quite closely continuous between v. 20, 21 and vi. 1; as also between vi. 17, 18 and vii. 1.

Ver. 1. **Workers together.**—With whom? Choose between (1) God, and (2) Christ. For (1) is the repeated use of "beseech," in v. 20, vi. 1; for (2) the "scheme" of the passage (see Homily on v. 20), according to which Paul and his fellow-ambassadors are doing in His (bodily) absence the work of the Great Ambassador. But for (1) it is pointed out that what Paul here urges is not precisely His message, "Be reconciled," but an exhortation to those who are "reconciled." (Also cf. 1 Cor. iii. 9.) "**Receive,**" "*acceptable,*" "*receive*" (ver. 17) [but *not* vii. 2], have all the same root, and give a real link of thought. **Beseech.**—In the (usual) threefold sense of *entreaty, exhortation* (and *consolation*). **In vain.**—Cf. 1 Cor. xv. 13, 17; Gal. ii. 2; Phil. ii. 16.

Ver. 2.—Isa. xlix. 8, as in LXX. *Paul's comment* begins at "*Behold,*" etc. A new section of Isaiah begins at xlix. Cheyne heads xlix.-lvii., "Vicarious Atonement" (cf. vi. 21). Kay, in *Speaker*, points out that in Isa. lviii. 5 the Day of Atonement is joined with the idea "day of acceptance." He adds: "The word for '*answered*' is the same that occurs in Ps. xxii. 21; where a Sufferer, who had been 'a reproach of men and **despised of the people**' (ver. 6), receives an answer from God in the crisis of His agony, and proclaims that '**all the ends of the earth**' shall remember and turn to the Lord (ver. 27)."

Ver. 3.—Connect closely with ver. 1; ver. 2 parenthetical. **Giving.**—Viz. Paul (and his fellow-ambassadors); not the Corinthians. **Offence.**—"*Occasion of stumbling.*" **Ministry.**—*I.e.* the *administration*, the discharge, of his function as "an ambassador." Note, close (verbal) parallel with viii. 20. "The original does not mean that he succeeds in giving no offence, but only that he tries to give none" (Waite, in *Speaker*). **Blamed.**—By the *human* observer, whether Christian or non-Christian.

Ver. 4. **Commending.**—Cf. iii. 1; illustrate by Rom. v. 8. **Ministers.**—Not "*the* ministers" (1 Cor. iii. 5). Stanley paraphrases somewhat: "Crushing afflictions, pressure of difficulties, narrow straits. The prevailing idea is of pressure and confinement; *each stage narrower than the one before*, so that no room is left for movement or escape." [Illustrate the *imagery* by Luke xii. 50; Phil. i. 23; the *word* is different.] Cf. with this enumeration xi. 23 *sqq.* *The outer life of an apostle.*

Ver. 5. **Tumults.**—Possibly "unsettlement of life" (cf. 1 Cor. iv. 11) (Stanley). More likely such as Acts xiv. 5, 19, xix. 24. "These probably stand last [of the hardships inflicted by men], partly because they were attended with peril of life and were often designed to destroy him, and partly because they were the occasion of a peculiar injustice, for the first Christian missionaries were accused of raising them and had to bear the infamy and the punishment" (Waite). [Examples of this are in Acts xvii. 6 (xxi. 38).] **Watchings.**—"Spells of sleeplessness" (Farrar), whilst working for bread. **Fastings.**—Involuntary, from sheer poverty. Cf. xi. 9; Phil. iv. 10-12.

Ver. 6.—Stanley compares the rhythmic form of this whole passage with Rom. viii. *sub. fin.*, and 1 Cor. xiii. Here the form of the words, rather than the thought, governs the order. "Each word stands singly without any apparent connection, as it came uppermost in his thoughts" (Stanley). Note, keep "*in,*" as in vers. 4, 5; not "*by.*" **Purity.**—Of conduct and heart and motive. **Longsuffering, kind.**—As in 1 Cor. xiii. 4. **Unfeigned love.**—As Rom. xii. 9.

Ver. 7. **By.**—Accurate from "*armour*" onward. **Armour.**—See in Rom. vi. 13 (which is literally "*weapons* [=armour here] of unrighteousness"), xiii. 12 (where "*works*" stands contrasted with "*armour*"), x. 4. "*Armour*" is, of course, a soldier's whole *armament*, offensive and defensive. "In Paul's usual sense of *righteousness* by faith" (Beet), is surely too specialised a meaning; rather, integrity of speech and action, are sword and shield, "**on right hand and on the left.**"

Ver. 8.—"By the *approbation* which his conduct evokes in good men, and by the *dishonour* it provokes from the bad, Paul recommends himself. For the approval of the good and the hostility of the bad alike proved that he was doing God's work." (Beet.) He had had both "*honour and dishonour*" at Corinth (1 Cor. iv. 12). **Deceivers.**—ii. 17, iv. 2; the very word is used of him in the Clementine Homilies, though he is not named. [The

quotation and an account of the Homilies are readily accessible in Stanley, *Apostolic Age*, pp. 378-379.]

Ver. 9. **Dying.**—"So great is their peril that they seem actually falling into the grave. . . . Yet in the moment of apparent destruction suddenly comes deliverance. . . . **Behold.** . . . Graphic picture (as in v. 17), retaining even the exclamation of wonder at the unexpected deliverance." (Beet.) Acts xiv. 19, 20 almost exactly gives the sentence pictorial embodiment. **Chastened.**—Well illustrated by Isa. liii. 4 (as suggested by Beet).

Ver. 11.—"The veil, which had hitherto been hung between the Apostle and his readers, is suddenly rolled away; we see them standing face to face; his utterance, so long choked by the counter-currents of contending emotions, is now, for the first time, clear and distinct ('our mouth is opened'), and for the only time in the two Epistles he calls them by name. With the loosing of his tongue his heart opens also; that heart, which was 'the heart of the world,' opens to receive in its large capacities his thousand friends: whatever narrowness of affection, whatever check to the yearnings of the soul, between them might exist, was not on his part, but on theirs; the only reward which he claimed for his paternal tenderness was a greater openness from them, his spiritual children." (Stanley.)

Ver. 12. **Straitened.**—Same word radically as in ver. 5. **Bowels.**—*I.e.* practically, "*heart*" (Phil. ii. 1).

Ver. 13. **In the same.**—"*In like kind*" (R.V.).

Ver. 14.—In *any* voluntary companionship; *marriage* is only one particular case of a general rule. **Be not.**—Really "*become not*," as if to assume that there was as yet no actual union (?). **Yoked.**—On a similar principle of discovering a world-wide principle in a Levitical enactment, as in 1 Cor. ix. 9, here Deut. xxii. 10 is widened, "spiritualised." [Waite adduces Lev. xix. 19, and notes the strong antipathy of the Levitical code to any interference with the original ordinance, "after their kind." See the "Johannean" antithesis of "*light*" and "*darkness*."]

Ver. 15. **Belial.**—Not really a proper name. Such a use of the word is due to the Vulgate. Very frequent in the Old Testament for "worthlessness," "recklessness," "lawlessness" (see ver. 14). "The term as used in 2 Cor. vi. 15 is generally understood of Satan, as the personification of all that is bad; Bengel explains it of Antichrist, as more strictly the opposite of Christ" (Smith, B.D., *sub. v.*). **Infidel.**—Only means as much as "*unbeliever*."

Ver. 16. **Temple.**—"*The*," not "*a*"; 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17 shows this symbolism one of the "stock"—the staple—ideas of Paul's religious thought. Lev. xxvi. 11, 12, freely quoted from LXX.; part of a solemn summing up of the blessings and the real scope of the Mosaic economy.

Vers. 17, 18.—Isa. lii. 11, freely quoted from LXX., and continued still more freely with reminiscences of Ezek. xx. 34 (which refers to the same gathering out from Babylon), and perhaps of 2 Sam. vii. 14. "**Daughters**" may be a reminiscence of Isa. xliii. 6; the sexes are equal "in Christ." [The manner of quotation has no necessary bearing upon the views of the New Testament writers *re* the Inspiration of the Old Testament. Preachers and writers who have believed in the strictest "dictation" theory of Inspiration, have nevertheless always felt free to quote either freely from memory, or intentionally *ad sensum* only, or paraphrastically, or with verbal exactness, as might be needed for their purpose.]

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 1—10.

*The Work and Outer Life of Ambassadors* (v. 20).

I. **Their appeal** (vers. 1-3).

II. **Their credentials** (vers. 4-10).

I. 1. Mark's Gospel, as usually read, closes with a good epitome of the Acts of the Apostles, and indeed of all the subsequent history of the Christian Church (xvi. 19, 20). "**He** was received up into heaven. . . . **They** went forth and preached everywhere . . . **the Lord working with them.**" Question of exact exposition, rather than of any practical moment, with whom these "*co-workers*" labour (see Critical Notes). In point of fact it is raised only between two aspects of the same great truth. The earthly workers do not labour in any isolation of merely human strength or wisdom. They are not left by their Divine Lord "to their own devices," or to their own resources. They are directed from above; they draw their supplies of strength from above; the communication is close and continuous between the Great Ambassador, Who in bodily presence has

withdrawn from men's sight, and the human representatives who are carrying on and carrying out His work below (see Homily on v. 20). In all review of the conditions of the work, and in all estimates of its "chances" of success at any given juncture, or in the face of any given combinations of obstacles, account must be taken of the Divine Worker, Who is not simply looking on at the workers, but is actively engaged in it all. They are "*workers together with Him.*" *The appeal*, therefore, *is not theirs, but His;* like that in v. 20.

2. (1) *The appeal is to those who have already responded* to that earlier one. They are "reconciled"; they have "received the grace of God." But that did not finish the work of their "*salvation.*" "Salvation" in its full sense only began when they were "reconciled to God" in the moment of their faith in the Sinless Substitute. True they were then "*saved,*" in regard to the penalty of sins; in that moment they came into a new relationship to God. But the Gospel contemplates a larger salvation than this: "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." In the moment of—in Pauline phrase—their justification, a work began, in which they "*co-operate*" with the Spirit and grace of God throughout all their after-course. In Birth a Life began. To what shall it grow? How far shall life develop? Shall it develop to *nothing*? Born "*in vain.*" After many fights and many victories shall life end in defeat and death? Fighting "*in vain.*" Shall the Exodus from Egypt end in death in the wilderness, even seeing Canaan from some Nebo-top of vision and yet not entering? Brought out of bondage "*in vain.*" Shall the Seed of the Great Sower be "*received*" [a related word, in Mark iv. 20] in good soil, indeed, but so choked with thorns, or so thin a covering of the unbroken rock, that, after a hasty, or a rankly vigorous growth, the seed flags and withers, and the sower has sown in these particular hearts "*in vain*"? In the first Gift indeed were all subsequent gifts; the first Grace had in it the possibility of all gifts besides. But it is a Talent, a Pound, with which a man must trade, or it has been received in vain. *God's work well begun may end in "failure,"*—"failure," that is, so far as the individual is concerned; no doubt what in their proximate purpose are "failures," serve some larger end, and contribute to the success of God's whole Great Plan. (2) "*In vain*" may carry the analysis of failure further back. The very message "Be reconciled" may never be responded to. It is "*grace*" that such a message is committed at all to ambassadors who may bear it even to unwilling, unready ears. It is "*grace*" that there ever was a Great Ambassador, Who has also been "made sin for us," etc. Very many know the fact, hear the message, but never give any practical response to it. So far as they are concerned, and for any use they make of it, Christ's death might have been non-existent. They pass by the Cross, and "die in their sins" (John viii. 21, 24). For them the grace of God has been "received in vain," to no purpose. It has ended in an empty issue. (3) By persistent inattention the heart may lose its ear for God's voice. By persistent worldliness, and much more by continued sins of sense, or covetousness, or unholy anger, and the like, the Spirit is grieved. He may be grieved away. If He withdraw,—the case is, one hopes, exceedingly rare,—the power to take the "*grace of God,*" offered as it is, is gone. By neglected prayer, by ill-spent Sabbaths, by secret omissions of, perhaps at first, small duties, the Spirit of reconciling "*grace*" may be constrained to withdraw His aid. Willing as He is to co-operate, He is never simply at men's call and bidding; the power to fulfil man's part in making lastingly fruitful use of "*the grace of God,*" is not guaranteed to be always at man's absolute command. "If we fail to put to practical use in the details of life the spiritual benefits received by the favour of God, even His favour to us becomes to us a useless and empty thing. An unread Bible, a wasted Sunday, and such knowledge of the truth as does not mould our life are the grace of God received in vain." (Beet.) (4) This appeal agrees with all

those cautions and warnings of the Word of God which proceed upon the assumption that "the grace of God" may really be "received" and yet not be suffered to issue in a final salvation. The racer may run for a great part of his course, and never finish it, so missing the prize of the calling which reached him from on high (Phil. iii. 14). Salvation wants "making sure."

3. *The encouragement they give to their hearers.*—Provision is abundantly secured for their making "a good finish"; provision against every emergency which may arise. Prompt, present, sufficient help. They need never yield, need never be overcome, need never be entangled or overwhelmed. There is always **a "now" salvation** (see Separate Homily).

4. *Their appeal is παράκλησις.*—A preacher's *matter* needs to be as varied as the varied aspects of Divine truth. He must also speak not only in many portions, *but in many manners.* A preacher's method must be varied: entreaty, exhortation, consolation,—all will be needed by the varying types of hearers, and their ceaselessly varying moods or circumstances. [An associate pastorate ought to supply this better than any but a few exceptionally many-sided men can do. Many ambassadors are needed to express and represent the One Great, and only Universal, Ambassador.] But he will never be satisfied, who is a true co-worker with God, unless by every variant of tone and manner and method of appeal he succeeds in so arousing, or hastening, or heartening those to whom he is sent, as that the "*grace*" of reconciliation once "*received*" shall end in the abundant success of the heavenly life.

5. *Observable* here, as everywhere, how *Paul grounds his appeals upon*, or strengthens his instructions by, references to *the Old Testament Scriptures.* It is hardly sufficient to say: "Of all the Epistles, however clear the evidence in some instances that they are addressed to those who have been originally heathens, there is not one which does not imply a familiar acquaintance with Jewish Customs and with the Scriptures of the Old Testament" (Stanley, *Apostolic Age*, p. 200). Paul's practice is exactly that of a modern missionary to a heathen land. He, like Paul, believes that in even the Hebrew Scriptures he has a word of universal address; an instrument of universal applicability and force; a message, to listen to which is an obligation upon all men, Jews or Gentiles, and which, as matter of experiment, has vindicated its universal cogency by the demonstration of the Spirit, which accompanied it, and before which even Gentile Christians bowed; in acknowledgment of the Divine force of argument and appeal; in acknowledgment of the Divine truth of a teaching which based itself, even for them, upon Scriptures which hitherto only their Jewish brethren had been accustomed to accept and submit to, as being of God. Paul knew no better arguments for Gentiles than those he would have used, and did use, for his fellow-Israelites. It was as illogical, but as self-justifying, as the similar use of the same Scriptures by a Christian missionary in his appeals to a heathen or a Mahometan heart. The historical occasion or embodiment is local, national, but the teaching of the Old Testament is part of God's revelation for all men. The principles of His action, and especially of His redemptive action, never change. In Old Testament or New Testament He is the same God in Christ. The Old Testament quotations of which this chapter is so remarkably full, carry with them, and contain within them, universal truth. Paul is no Jew merely dealing as a Rabbi with a great literary monument of the past of his nation. He is a Christian ambassador who finds that "every scripture inspired of God is profitable" for Gentile as well as for Jew.

II. **The ambassador's credentials.**—1. *He carries credentials.* Paul claimed that he needed no credentials to Corinth, except the witness in every Corinthian Christian's heart of the effectiveness with which the human ambassador had discharged his function. Every "*reconciled*" Corinthian, rejoicing that he had

"*received the grace of God*," welcomed Paul without further "letters commendatory" (iii. 1). But to others, the ambassador, "*the minister of God*," commends himself as such by the many tokens which, in almost rhythmic array, he proceeds to enumerate. Saved men are seals to a man's ministry; but until they are saved, he must have a commission whose validity is attested by many another seal.

2. *And what a series!—The first is negative*, but not a thing of small moment. He is careful that *nothing* in his personal conduct, and nothing in the manner of his official life, shall be *a stumbling-block* to Jew or Gentile. No thoughtless, inconsistent, offensive behaviour; *e.g.* no "lording it over the heritage of God"; no selfish, self-indulgent use of his Christian liberty or of his Apostolic privileges to their fullest extent, regardless, reckless, of the consequences, direct or indirect, to others. His life and example, who is an ambassador, a minister, of Christ will for that reason carry weight beyond those of an ordinary Christian, whether for good or evil, for helpfulness or occasion of stumbling. Each particular case of inconsiderateness, or inconsistency, or sin in him will be generalised—*as good example will usually not be!*—and made representative of the class to which he belongs. Their "*administration*" of the commission to exhort men to "be reconciled to God," with all that such a reconciliation carries with it, will be brought into disrepute, and "*blamed*," if the "*ministers of Christ*" be unworthy or unfaithful in their personal or official life. Note how *careful* Paul is *of the reputation of the whole body* of fellow-workers. There is none of that self-centered strength, or pride, which, calling itself "independence," goes forward on its own course, whatever be the bearing of its action upon the world's estimate of the ministry and its work. This noble man acts as if put in trust with the reputation of the whole number. "He felt that the influence of Christianity upon the world depended very much upon the collective impression made by its prominent advocates, and that this impression would be determined in no small measure by his personal conduct. He was therefore careful so to act in everything as to cause no spiritual injury to any one, lest such injury might lessen the collective influence of the leaders of the Church." (Beet.) He is wanting in one of the first credentials of the true minister, who is not sensitive lest his own discharge of his function should in any way prejudice his brethren in the ministry of the word of reconciliation. The true ambassador will feel that the honour, first of the Great Ambassador, and next of his human co-workers, is in some degree in his hands. Responsibility for holding it high rests upon each single man.

3. Then follow, in startling series, *the positive seals of a valid commission*, the *notes of a true ambassador*. (Consult Critical Notes upon these.) Observe in vers. 4-6 how the very "penalties" of his Apostolic character and work, the strokes of man's injustice, and even of his own people's niggardliness, are by a wondrous alchemy of grace transformed into tokens by which he knows, and by which others know, himself a true ambassador. [In Gal. vi. 17 the scars which mark his body, every one of them with a memory and a history to himself, are the brands of Christ's ownership.] "If I had none of these troubles, I should begin to doubt whether I were in the ministry. If the world, or the Church, saw none of these things in me, if I slipped through cheaply, escaping all such hardships, they might ask whether indeed I really belonged to the body of ambassadors." The "popular preacher" who gets everybody's good word may well pray to be kept on his guard against his Master's woe (Luke vi. 26).

4. These are credentials which others make for him, though he wears them as his badge of service. But *next follow some for which himself must take thought.* A man needs to watch his own spirit with closest vigilance, in the midst of the persecution of the cruel world, under their false accusations, and when even within the Church he is opposed by "unreasonable and wicked men" (2 Thess. iii. 2), when an ungrateful Church leaves him to toil far into the night for the bread which

his labour spent on them in the daytime deserved that they should provide. "Longsuffering" will have much occasion to train it in full beauty and strength. "Love unfeigned," indeed "love" at all, will be a triumphant vindication of the grace of God in a Paul whose apostleship is challenged. He will take care that, so far as depends upon himself, "*the Holy Ghost*" shall dwell within him in fulness of power. In motive and act he will "keep himself *pure*." It will be a further credential, appealing to any critic or opponent who will think, "This man is growing and ripening, day by day, in *knowledge* of Divine things. He is certainly qualified to be a minister of Christ to me." And, above all, when such an opponent sees an ungrudging "*kindness*" which, Godlike, spends itself upon even "the unthankful and the evil," he says rebuked and self-convicted, "That man is really a minister of Christ."

5. Then come the many points on which true ministers, whose commission still runs in full validity, will guard their own spirit and inner life. Misunderstood, condemned of men, they will so keep themselves blameless that, whilst "*righteousness*" of motive and dealing may now and then be the weapons of offence and defence, they may far oftener leave their reputation in the hands of Him Who knows them to be no "*deceivers*," etc., and meanwhile go steadily on with their work and "*ministry*." Even life itself, often endangered, shall be safe in His keeping, Who will give many a startling deliverance, which shall be rather a resurrection than a mere deliverance. But no credential will be more forcible in its appeal for recognition than this: "*We possess all things.* **We make many rich.**" "Great poverty, but great peace." "*Always rejoicing!*" Paul's Epistle to the Philippians is a fine illustration of the true Christian *cheerfulness*, written as it was amidst circumstances naturally calculated to distress and depress and daunt. [Says Bradburn, an intimate associate of John Wesley's later days: "It was almost impossible to be dull or dissatisfied in his company. . . . I never saw him *low-spirited* in my life. . . . When speaking of any who imagined religion would make people morose and gloomy, I have heard him say in the pulpit 'That sour godliness is the devil's religion.' In his answer to a letter I had written to him (in a time of strong temptation) he has these words: 'That melancholy turn is directly opposite to a Christian spirit. Every believer ought to enjoy life.' . . . I heard him say, 'I dare no more fret than curse and swear.'"]

6. What is the argument from all these marks? "Each side of these contrasts commends the apostles as ministers of God. That men whom some decry as deceivers are found to be true, that men set aside as unknown become day by day more fully known, that men who seem to be in the jaws of death are rescued and men apparently smitten by God live still, that underneath visible sorrow there is constant joy, and that utter poverty is but a mask hiding infinite wealth, is abundant proof that they in whom these contradictions meet are indeed servants of God. Thus amid many and various hardships, in a spotless and kindly life animated by the Holy Spirit and by sincere love to men, and armed with a word which commends itself as the truth and is confirmed by the manifested power of God, in everything Paul and his companions claim respect and act as becomes ministers of God." (Beet.)

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verse* 14—vii. 1.

The paragraph may be gathered up round the central figure—

*The Temple of the Living God.*—The Church collectively, then, is:—

I. **The scene of special Divine manifestation.**—1. His manifestation makes "*holy ground*." The flame which played harmless around the Bush in Horeb

made a spot where, for the nonce, every man must tread with bare feet. [*I.e.* he is no better than the poorest or than a slave when he stands there in the presence of God; seen from God's elevation all disparities of rank are merged in one common lowliness.] So whilst God is manifest in all His works,—in Nature to those who have eyes opened to see Him; in mankind,—for there is no need to deny, no honour done to God or the Church in denying, that God by the redemptive Gift of the Spirit, is amongst all men, of every race and religion and age; yet He is most conspicuously manifest in His choicest Work, His Church. So also *a* Church has no holiness unless He be in its midst, in its means of grace, in its success, in its members: **all**, in all. Solomon built his Palace for Jehovah, as Moses' workmen had, long before, made the Tent; but, until God entered, and in both "*dwelt amongst them*," the one was a Palace only, and not a Temple, and the other was only a tent, larger and of more costly materials than the others round it, but not *the* Tabernacle. [Cf. even the theory of classical heathenism (Smith, *Dictionary of Antiq.*): "It was necessary then for a temple to be sanctioned by the gods, whose will was ascertained by the augurs, and to be consecrated or dedicated by the will of man (pontiffs). When the sanction of the gods had not been obtained, and where the mere act of man had consecrated a place to the gods, such a place was only a *sacrum*, *sacrarium*, or *sacellum*."] So, also, let there be an organisation of the most thorough and perfect, part and part closely articulated, wisely related, admirably adapted to its high purpose; let wealth, numbers, influence, all fill the Church roll; yet if there be no presence of God, there is no Church. If He be not amongst them, they are not His people. "*Your* house—not *My*—is left unto you," was said when the material fabric was at its culmination of beauty and glory, the treasury never better filled, the ritual never better observed, the show of religiosity never greater in all the history of Israel. But no Shekinah, though a Holy of Holies was there still; no Presence, to be hid by as splendid a Veil as had ever been wrought. Pompey was amazed to find the inmost shrine empty. The world sometimes makes proof of the Church; the inquirer penetrates within, and within again; is it only to find a Most Holy without a God? Then that "Church" is no Temple of God; or is one no longer. The inquirer finds in even a half-organised Church like that of Corinth: "God is among you of a truth" (1 Cor. xiv. 25).

2. *This is the glory of the Church.*—When Solomon substituted Temple for Tabernacle, everything was new, with one exception; everything but that was more costly and on a larger scale. *The same ark* was brought into the new Sanctuary from the old. Looked, perhaps, small, unsuitable, unworthy, "mean"; its art very far beneath that of the grand new shrine of Solomon's "advanced" days. But *he dared not change that.* The throne of Jehovah, His mercy-seat [="throne of grace," with the elements of the name reversed], the testimony of His Law,—all these must be the same. The *same God* must own, hallow, inhabit, the new Who had in that way made the old a dwelling-place of God on earth. [As, then, the continuous connection with the same personality year after year is no small *note* of the identity of the body; so also, that the organisation should, age after age, be the dwelling-place (or, to change the figure, the ὄργανον) of the same God, is one of the *notes* of the One Church, in all the Churches, ages, creeds, lands.]

II. **Separated that it may be this.**—1. Here again the Jewish idea coincided with the heathen; it was universal. In classical heathenism, *e.g.*, the separateness was of the essential of a temple. In strictness the *templum*, like the Greek τέμενος, was the separated area, within which usually rose the special building that came to appropriate the name of Temple. It was, literally, marked off, as well as hallowed by rite and sacrifice, from the outside area beyond. Tabernacle and Temple in Israel had their surrounding court and open space, as well

as the true shrine [the *ναός* of this passage] which stood in its midst. [Cf. the "bounds" set round the base of Sinai.] If God is to dwell in the midst of a people, peculiarly His own (Tit. ii. 14), His own purchased possession, they must "*come out and be separate.*" 2. *Separateness is inevitable*, whether we start from the requirement of the nature of God, or from the innate difference between the "*sons and daughters*" and the "enemies" of God (Jas. iv. 4). "*What communion? What fellowship? What part?*" It lies in the ἐκ- of ecclesia. The congregation called together, is first of all called *out* from the world. Singularity is not necessarily the true separateness; oddity is not certainly or invariably holiness, or a mark of it. No virtue in mere disconformity. But given the holiness, given the real heart separateness, then outward distinction, of perhaps a very marked type, is inevitable. None know it, or expect it, with a more sure instinct than do the excluded "world." If the figure be pushed so far, as it *may*, and—to correspond with the facts—*must* often be; if, in the very Temple of the Church there be, as in the literal Temple of sacred antiquity, an outer court of inferior holiness, and an inner court, and again an inmost building, with its shrine; yet even the outer court must have its wall. It cannot be left the mere open ground, undistinguishable from the space beyond. Certainly the Church is not co-extensive with the redeemed Race. "*Come out from among them.*" 3. The customary code of distinctions between Christians and non-Christians, between Church and world, — not only formulated in registered membership, or in attendance at the Lord's Table, but in amusements, books, friendships, and the like,—is no gratuitous limitation of liberty or pleasure,—which are naturally as desirable to Christians as to anybody else; it is only the orderly statement of the issue of repeated, numerous, varied experiments, and these often made by those who would not unwillingly have discovered, if it had been possible, a *modus vivendi* under which Church and world need not have stood so sharply apart. The things "*tabooed*" are only so put under ban, because often verified experiment has shown, either that they are the expressions of a heart-alienation from God, or that they minister to it; a heart which cannot be that of "*sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty.*" 4. Particular case of this, often drawn out from ver. 14: *Mixed marriages.* [Obviously there are many other cases, analogous in the principle which governs them.] It is a false start in "building the house" (Ps. cxxvii. 1), when a young couple stand side by side before God, to "plight their wedding troth either to other," perfectly fitted for each other, physically, in education, in character, in social status,—perfectly, in all but *the* one thing. For years, perhaps, to have every taste, every interest, in common, their two wills working together in perfect harmony, the "twain one,"—until they come to the deepest interest of all; then, deeply sundered! Not a secret between them, except here. They can talk about everything else together, with the most open-hearted confidence, but on the Dearest Friendship, upon the deepest joys and sorrows, the closest interests of all, the lips of one are closed. It is a poor fulfilment of the ideal of marriage, when, as the two travel side by side on life's journey, there is between them the deep and far-reaching cleavage which parts between the new creation and the old nature. A poor finish to the married life, when, after fifty, sixty years, during which husband and wife have lovingly lived one life, the wife, perhaps, goes forward to her part in the "inheritance incorruptible," etc., and *he*, to find that he has been "treasuring up wrath against the Day of wrath." Peter (1 Pet. iii. 7) has a fine expression: "Heirs together of the Grace of Life," *i.e.* heirs of the "Life which is life indeed" (1 Tim. ii. 15, *best reading*), and which is a "grace" of God. An ideal marriage is suggested there. Husband and wife marrying with "great expectations" indeed! Jointly heirs of Life; both with Life eternal as a holy, glorious reversion. Fellow-travellers, helpers of each other's weary footsteps. Held together by the profound common understanding

which "spiritual" have with "spiritual." An "*unequally yoked*" marriage usually either means "a cross" for life for the Christian—a cross of his own making, never designed for him by God—or that Christian turning back again into the world.

Some **Christian business men** will take no **partner** but a Christian, on the very intelligible ground that, since religion is to come into business, as into all else in their life, it may occur—in fact, it does—that they should on principle be divided as to the acceptance or non-acceptance of a business proposal, or as to the following up, or the turning aside from, a promising opening. In all such matters, the Christian man is accustomed to do nothing without reference to a great Adviser, Whose "advice," once obtained, he is bound to follow. But f his partner can be told nothing of this Divine Counsellor? If all such motives and reasons seem to him amiable but unpractical "ideals," with which he has scant patience? "*What communion?*" etc. Take the best specimen of the man of the world in business, and take a poor specimen of Christian,—it may be possible to show the "worldling" more admirable. But take one of the many fine samples of Christian men of business, one whose religion permeates and pervades, and has a real hold upon, every transaction with the outside world, and upon all his dealings with his employés; "*yoke*" him—not by any means with the worst specimen of worldly man, but—with a man of fair, or very good, business character who, however, makes no claim or attempt to "mix up religion with business"; it is inevitable, either that the Christian man must sooner or later adjust himself to the standard of his yoke-fellow, or that their relations will be strained till they both discover, "*What part hath he that believeth?*" etc. "*Unequally yoked*" in **pleasure-taking** will follow similar lines. More decidedly than in other cases must the word often be used in regard to this, "*the unclean thing.*" Novels whose *motif* is some irregular relation between man and woman; "irregular" being euphemistic for adultery or fornication, at least such as is condemned in the Court of the Great Judge of hearts (Matt. v. 27, 28). Plays whose code of morality will not bear being laid by the side of the rule of even the surface reading of the Ten Commandments, to say nothing of their deeper, searching significance, touching motive and secret thought. Places whose atmosphere and associations are notoriously unfriendly to the spiritual life; where the non-Christian does not expect to find a Christian man. Say to him: "What are *you* doing, reading that book,—you, a Christian?" Or, "What affinity can bring *you* here,—you, a Christian?" "What possible liking can *you* have for the atmosphere of this place?" Of no practical service to discuss or defend what "might be"; to discuss ideals of books, pleasures, places, friendships, which are simply visionary, and "in the air." Of very much of the actual, concrete recreation (in the widest sense) of the non-Christian community, one must say to the Christian, "*Come out, . . . be separate.*" The healthy, vigorous, spiritual life will secure, will create, a definite, far-reaching separateness, befitting the "*temple of God.*" **On no other conditions can God dwell amongst His people.** The Temple must be kept for Him, and for Him alone.

III. **The obligation lies on every Christian man to keep the Temple separate from sin.**—*There are no merely official guardians of the holiness of the Temple of God.* Christ made Himself a pattern of the duty of every Christian to vindicate the holiness of Jehovah's sanctuary. He had no official authority, to purify the Temple courts as He did. At most, it was the extraordinary, self-vindicating prerogative of a Zealot or a Prophet. But every man who is a member of the new Israel of God must regard himself as a guardian of the sanctity of Jehovah's dwelling-place. The Temple is nothing, as distinct from its component "sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty." It has indeed a corporate

holiness which each one of them must guard; but their personal holiness underlies the corporate. Unholy Christians cannot make a holy Church. Hence the illustration of the Temple passes over into that of a holy Family, whose every "*son and daughter*" is to be jealous for the family honour; and this again passes over in vii. 1 to that of a personal "*cleansing from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.*" The Temple in this paragraph is the actual Temple-building only. But it is noteworthy how Christ would have even the Outer Court hallowed. What He cleansed was the great marble-paved Court of the Gentiles. "Would suffer no man to carry any vessel through it" (Mark xi. 16). The life of the Church, like the life of the individual Christian, has its outer court, as well as its inner and its inmost shrine. All lies within the holy precinct; all is part of the Temple; and even the outer-court life—the business-meeting, the finance, the organisation, and much more the philanthropy and social work—must be kept holy. "Separateness" is the law throughout; "no touching of the unclean" thing must be tolerated, even in these. The Church must, *e.g.*, have clean hands when she touches money, and must handle none which would defile her. The Church, the Christian Temple, has its outer court of personal attachments. There is a Church within the Congregation. See in Acts xxi. 28, 29 a vivid illustration of a zeal which should find its higher, its highest, embodiment in the Christians to whom our paragraph appeals. They thought Paul had brought the Gentile Trophimus, not only into the Court of the Gentiles, but beyond, into the inner court reserved for Israelites. M. Clermont Ganneau some years ago found built into a door-jamb in Jerusalem one of the marble tablets which were inserted into the boundary-wall of the Court of Israel in the Temple of Herod: "LET NO MAN OF OTHER RACE ENTER HERE ON PAIN OF DEATH." Whatever welcome into its outer court the Church may give to all who care to come thus far from the outside into a holy precinct of approach to God, she must have an inner Court of Israel. If the "*unequally yoked*" man may bring his partners in the yoke so far as into the outer court, they may come no farther. No heathen alliance must find lodging within the holy Temple itself (Neh. xiii. 4-9). Every man will be a Christian Zealot for the honour and the purity of the Temple; every son of God Almighty will regard himself as charged with the care of the honour of the family for holiness; he will "*cleanse himself*," lest he be the occasion of defilement or dishonour to the Temple in which he has a place. Note, that all this is put by way of exhortation, and not of obligation only. Paul *reasons*; God *calls*; He *allures* to separateness and holiness *by gracious promises*. Every man of God's Church shall be a Solomon, to whom Jehovah will be "*a Father*." [Further material on this Temple topic may be found under 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17, vi. 19.]

## *SEPARATE HOMILIES.*

Ver. 2. *A "Now!" Salvation.*

**I. Pivot word of passage.**—Make pictorial by parallel of our tiny earth, crowded with its tiny dwellers, borne along in its orbit, hanging poised in space; infinite space above it, below it, around it, in every direction; a point, a minute island in a sea of space. So our life. Of how much are we masters? Think backward,—to the day of Adam; of "the beginning"; of the creation of the "sons of God" who rejoiced over the birth of earth (Job xxxviii. 7). And there, at the Land's End of creaturely being, we gaze out into limitless, past duration. Think forward,—to Judgment; to the end of some vast measure of heavenly happiness; forward again; stop anywhere, yet away there still stretches limitless future duration. A midway parenthesis, the history of Earth; a midway parenthesis within this again, a man's life—our own; and of this we possess,

have, know, only the midmost point; an instant, coming, here, gone, with more than arrow's swiftness; just now the earliest moment of the Future; whilst we speak of it, the Present; before the words are finished, the latest moment of the Past. *Life to us is* "**Now**." The *present moment*, hanging poised, like earth, midway in the infinite; duration unmeasured behind, duration unmeasured before. "The *dead* past;" "the *living* present;" the future just coming to birth. Our needs, dangers, temptations, duties, all belong to the "*Now*" of life. God's "*salvation*" (in largest sense,—all conceivable, and needed, grace and help) belongs accordingly to the present. Other help may be too early or too late; God's salvation is stamped with "**Now**." "'**Now**' *is the day of salvation*;" our *necessary* time is God's "*accepted time*."

II. **The elementary salvation of pardon is a present blessing.**—1. Glorious Gospel this, but needs guarding. May not take any chance, indifferent, unaffected man who will give attention and intellectual assent to the proposition that there is salvation through Jesus Christ for him, and thereupon assure him that he is "saved." No man who has not learned his sinfulness, guilt, peril—only relieved by the redeeming grace of Christ—has mastered the A B C of religion. 2. Yet even to such a man we might say, "Come forthwith—now—ask for the sense of sin." The moment of beginning to inquire after God is the "*now*" of salvation, so far as this that, No seeking soul was ever left to seek or to perish without finding. 3. Urge even upon such, "Why not seek now? In peril of 'judgment' now, your need is 'now.' Terms will never be more favourable. Conditions in yourself may become less and less favourable. *All* the Father's love; *all* the Son's grace; *all* the Spirit's help; you have them *all*, —now!" 4. Young people speculate: "Time enough! Many things *may* happen! Special wave of 'revival' influence, perhaps, bearing many, and ourselves, with it, with less of singularity when 'everybody' is seeking salvation." 5. *True use of Paul's word is to an aroused, truly repentant soul*, seeking earnestly; to whom "*salvation*" is matter of urgent present concern. "Save me, O God!" "*I have heard thee in a time accepted; that time accepted is* **Now**." Or, "I must first do this, or that." "**Now** *is the day of salvation*." The moment salvation becomes matter of *present concern* on the soul's part, it is matter on God's part of *present, offered grace*. When man says "Now," God says "Now" also.

III. **The after, many-sided, "salvation" of the believer is a "Now" blessing.**—1. *This nearer to* the purpose of *Paul here*. Quotes Isa. xlix. 8; addressed originally to Messiah, discouraged in His work. Paul is encouraging men who were in danger, under pressure or seduction of temptation, of making a poor finish to the "*gracious*" beginning of a Christian life, "*receiving grace of God in vain*." "You *need* never give way, or give up, or fail. At every moment of new need, God will be near with new help." The "*salvation*" of pardon only the first link in a chain of "salvations" reaching up to glory; the first round of a Jacob's ladder reaching to threshold of heaven. Shall need new help, defence, strength, at each new step, as well as at the first and lowest. *At, with, in*, each new "*now*." 2. *E.g.* Luther at Worms. (Ps. xlvi., "*A very present* help *in* time of trouble.") In hall of Diet; greatest and wisest of Germany, of Europe, there; greatest prince of the Continent presiding. For most part hostile; many itching to lay hands on audacious monk, hardly restrained by emperor's "safe conduct." Only a few venturesomely sympathising. Luther had shrunk; overheard in his chamber (D'Aubigné, Pt. ii., c. 8) crying out before God: "How . . . the world . . . gapes to swallow me up! . . . How weak the flesh!" etc. Men saw in the hall the lion-like man. God saw in the chamber the helpless soul laying hold of the "*now*" *salvation* needed in that

supreme hour. *E.g.*, better, 2 Tim. iv. 16-18. Paul before "*the lion*" Nero; life depending on the drunken whim of a deified monster. "*No man stood by me.*" Peril so extreme that not a Christian in Rome dared to show himself in Court-house, (*more Romano*) to stand by the dock, a friend of the prisoner. But "*the Lord*" (not forgetting how He once stood before His judges, and not a disciple dared show himself—except, perhaps, John) "*stood by me*," *took His stand* (*aor.*; *q.d.* in the dock), an unseen, but real, present Helper, and "*delivered*," at least in that "*first appearing*" for trial, with a "*now*" salvation. "*I* **am** with you always,—all the days, each successively, and as each new day needs Me." *E.g.* day of commercial reverse. Mansion gives place to modest villa; villa to mere cottage; careless affluence exchanged for close-calculating straitness; comforts for necessaries. Father looks round table; no fewer, nor less hungry, mouths. Yet no hard words about "luck," or God, or man. Strange calm on faces; light in eyes, as if rather some piece of good fortune had happened. Why? "**Now** *is day of salvation.*" *E.g.* battling—perhaps on knees—with our own characteristic temptation. Cry, "Help *now*!" He answers, "I have heard thee, . . . *now*!" So always: with the need, the succour; with the foe, the Friend; with the grief, the grace. Only one moment to live at once, and that the moment of God's "*now*" *salvation.*

IV. **Present condition—saved or unsaved—is our true standing before God.**—"Now," not "*yesterday*," nor "*once*," is the day of any "*salvation*" that avails us. 1. German poem: Mother holding in arms dying child; its breath going out in short gasps; mother clings tighter, as if to retain the fleeting spirit; when all is over, still clings, as if refusing to believe that she only holds body of her child. So Christian man clings to old membership, old routine of service and worship, long after "spirit" which gave these any value or meaning has departed; clings the more closely, as if to silence the misgiving that all is not as it used to be, nor so well. Our *Salvation status* before God is a thing of "*now*." 2. Oscillating lives, swinging between "Near to God," "Far from God"; "Near to God," "Far from God." Can photograph a swinging pendulum, with instantaneous shutter and rapid plate. What if the "call" which fixes record of our relation to God for ever, *photograph* us at wrong end of the oscillation?

Ver. 9. "*Unknown.*"

**I. This ought never to be true, absolutely.**—1. *No persons know this better, or insist upon it more strongly, than the men of the world.* They expect of a Christian a character which will not let him slip through the world "*unknown*" as a Christian. Speak to a non-professor about another, known to you as a professor of religion, and with whom he is in daily business contact, but whose religion is so deep down in the heart that it never finds its way to the surface in the life. Perhaps you get a look of surprise; if, indeed, all the man's courtesy can repress a long-drawn "Oh!" of astonished incredulity. No greater humiliation, no deeper sorrow, to a Christian minister, who has been, perhaps warmly, commending one of his people, than to hear: "So-and-so a Christian? We who are with him every day would never have found it out. He can be passionate with the most hasty of us! Unforgiving as the hardest! Men say ugly things about his business ways too! Thought you Christians 'renounced the world'! But So-and-so is thoroughly one of us in all our amusements. So far as we see, he judges by our standards and lives on our principles." The world knows as well as the Church, that a servant should be more diligent and trusty for being a Christian; that a mother's conversion should be known by her husband and family. They do not understand a "light of the world," which is not visible, nor makes perceptible difference in the darkness

around. They will ask whether a man can be of the "salt of the earth," whilst nobody tastes any saltness in his conversation, and he imparts no savour by his life. The world demands that, if religion be what preachers and Bible say it is, the effects on religious men should be palpable and patent, even in the home and in the world; always felt in the life; sometimes, at least, heard from the tongue.

2. Christian is professedly seeking another world than this (Heb. xi. 44). Go with a crowd; you may escape notice. Go against the direction of the movement of a crowd; you cannot but attract attention, perhaps not the most favourable. Become "a marked man" at once. How is he to escape notice, and perhaps not too gentle or friendly notice, whose life-theory implies, "You are going ruin-wards; for safety and life turn [be converted] and go my way"? Live with American or German resident in England for business purposes. Soon discoverable that these are not English fellow-countrymen. Not to speak of the un-English accent, the talk is of "home"—in the States or Germany. The standard for everything is how things are done in America or Germany. Among us, but evidently not of us. So Christians are not *seeking* a country, "another world"; they already belong to it. Phil. iii. 20, "Citizenship is in heaven." Speech should bewray them. The "home" ought to be yonder; this only the temporary abode for our Master's purposes and business and work. Judge of men and things by that world's standards. In India, devotees have their god-mark in ashes upon their foreheads; an experienced observer can tell at once to what god a man is devoted. "Servants of God sealed," even now, "in their foreheads." So long as the "spirit of world" (1 Cor. ii. 12) and Spirit of God are so diverse, they in whom they dwell will be as manifestly distinct; the man "in Christ" and the man "of the world" can never be mistaken one for the other. *A Christian unknown and unknowable is an anomaly.*

3. *The Lord is the pattern.*—"In the world; world *knew Him not*" (John i. 10). True; but, literally, they knew Him well enough! He affected no singularity of dress or manners, as John did; yet "He could not be hid." The centre of attraction, whether of love and gratitude, or of wonder or hate. The best known, loved, hated personage in History to-day. Best known, loved, hated man in Palestine in His time. "As He is, so are we in this world." "Unknown, yet well known, by holiness in all manner of conversation."

II. **In what sense the words are true.**—Look again at the Divine Pattern. *They understood not His dignity.* The boy in Nazarene village; the young carpenter who had been an ordinary workman and synagogue worshipper amongst His family and neighbours; the young teacher who admitted Peter and his friends to most familiar intercourse;—He is God's Well-beloved Son tabernacling in flesh. A stupendous fact this, claiming a stupendous faith. Hardly anybody around Him recognised the fact. Brothers thought Him beside Himself, and would not, for a long time, believe in Him. His mother knew the secret of His birth, yet never interposed without bringing on herself His gentle rebuke for her dull, earthly conceptions of Him and of His work. "His own" Nation had expected Him for ages, and with unusual intensity was just then longing for His Advent. He came, and they gave God's Son, their King, only mockery and a cross. Not a case where "world knows nothing of its greatest men" until they are gone from its midst. A spiritual blindness hid Him from their eyes, and made Him "*unknown.*" Pilate is typical of the universal "world." The King stood before him in the judgment hall of Herod's palace. Pilate only saw a peasant, weary with a night of sleeplessness, anxiety, mockery. Eyes weary; face bruised with stripes and blows; a prisoner with bound hands. He speaks of His kingdom. In unfeigned astonishment Pilate says, "*Thou*

a king, then? **Thou!**" When the King spoke of a kingdom not of this world, a kingdom whose subjects were "of the truth," the secret came out. "What is Truth? What do I know, or want to know, about Truth? My business is politics. Thy concern is not truth, but thy life." Such a King, such a kingdom, such topics, were hidden from the mind and heart of His judges. "*Unknown.*" So "the Christian is the highest style of man"; the humblest Christian is invested with a true royalty, the highest, the eternal. "Partakers of Divine nature" (2 Pet. i. 4); free access to the King of kings; all His support and interest at their disposal at every step. "Great expectations" indeed, and the title-deeds in their heart. The world understands pride of "birth," but being born of God is a thing "*unknown*" to it. It knows greatness based on power, or wealth, or intellectual endowments; but a greatness based on holiness is "unknown." An inheritance in the future, in heaven, whose title-deeds are only in the strong-room within the heart, is dreamy, visionary, unpractical, outside its range, and of value only according to a standard of which it knows nothing: it all goes for nothing, when, indeed, it is not subject of ridicule or contempt. Sons of God have a life which is a mystery to themselves: "Wind bloweth where it listeth," etc. To them, the mystery is *how* it is; to the world, *what* it is. Christians must be prepared for misconstruction, misrepresentation, scorn, persecution, because their life, experiences, principles, are "*spiritual* things" unknown by the "natural" man (1 Cor. ii. 14). Conviction of sin is an unaccountable melancholy, a fuss without adequate reason. The peace which follows and crowns his faith in Christ; his new "sonship" and its joy, etc., these are enthusiasm. If the world is bitter, it denounces all these experiences as delusion or worse; if courteous, it says, as one of Sir J. Y. Simpson's professional friends did of him on his conversion, "I don't understand this new turn of Simpson's; yet he is a man of good sense." "*Unknown.*" The ignorance may be dense and full of enmity. "Enthusiasm!" "Hypocrites, humbugs." Their devotion to bringing men to God "must be interest, or money profit of some sort"; their life is "folly" or "pretence"; their religious vocabulary "cant"; their abstinence from worldly pleasures "Pharisaism, moroseness, fanaticism"; their denunciation of "worldly" sin is bigotry, fanaticism. The world knows nothing of such aims, nothing of a soul's life and its dangers, nothing of the real meaning of sin. 1. What, then, of the "Christians" who are not in this sense "unknown," whom the world does understand and approve? 2. What of such as are known, rather by a pungent, acrid smoke emitted from the fire within their breast, than by any heat or light from it? 3. What, also, of the world to which Christians are "unknown"?

Ver. 10. *Rich Poverty.*—How necessary to hear the whole of a matter. Hearing only "*as poor*," we should say: "Here is as sad and drear a lot as mortal ever inherited. The man has lost all heart." If we heard only the second; "Here is Fortune's favourite, intoxicated with his uncounted treasures." The first part of the text must not be explained away; the second cannot be. Paul was not even owner of as much land as would serve him for a grave; yet was a greater possessor than the wealthiest or mightiest of the world. No juggler with words, no maddened enthusiast, rich only in imaginary possessions, was Paul; the houseless wanderer was really possessor of all things.

I. "**Having nothing.**" Then

1. *The truly great are not essentially the visibly rich.*—Needs proclaiming in our materialistic age. To a man "well off" many mansions open their doors, whilst they exclude poverty like leprosy. There are circles where wealthy vice has the ready *entrée*, if only the vice be decently veiled, or not too obtrusive, but where virtue without

its £10,000 would not be admitted for a moment. [And would not desire to be!] How often has the Church in this imitated the world! Paul, as he was, would hardly to-day excite notice or win wide admiration. *Self-impoverishment crowns with greatness.* His poverty was *voluntarily incurred*, for Jesus' sake.

2. *It becomes us to make greater self-denials.*—There is only worth in our self-denials when *ourselves* really deny self. It is not often for the reason *that we have taken it up*, that the cross is heavy.

3. *God does not reward His servants with material pay.*—He does not attach to material possessions the importance we do. [If they were the "good" men account them, depend upon it "there would be no want" of that good "to them that fear Him."] He will let us dare and do for Him without a *bribe.*

4. *God's poor are the "best off."* The Master promised that whoever for Him left houses, lands, or the like, should "receive a hundredfold" here, and then "eternal life." If there is a servant of Christ bemoaning his poverty, let him lift up his head, and grasp the title-deeds of his rightful heritage, and read in them "**as having nothing, yet**"

II. "**Possessing all things.**"—1. *By holding a true relation to them all.* The true possession is much more than ownership, or occupation, or merely having. The "*possession*" of a series of fine paintings is much more than that they are in the man's gallery, while he has never felt their power, or been enlarged and uplifted by them. He is no "*possessor*" of a library to whom his books are unread and unreadable. His employé librarian, or his poor, scholarly, neighbour who borrows them, has far more truly a "possession" of them. The Christian man may not own a house or an acre; but the world is for him, as much as for the owner who hath nothing but "the beholding with his eyes" (Eccles. v. 11).

2. *It is an entirely false relation* to things when their only value or desirableness is *to have them to the exclusion of anybody else*, which is what "ownership" too often means. The man to whom they are full of God, and who is himself in right relation to God, has the joy they can give and were meant to give. Many a man is really immured in a real dungeon whilst he inhabits his mansion. There is many a man who never walks under the shadow of "his" noble trees, or by the side of "his" lake, or through "his" lovely gardens, but with an aching or empty heart, or with a guilty conscience, or a memory which is a perpetual scourge. The Christian labourer on "his" estate has a far more real heart possession than has the "owner."

3. *Men who fret for what they have not do not own what they have.*—[Ahab (1 Kings xx.); the kingdom has no value because the little vineyard of Naboth is not his.]

4. If a man's nature is ripened, enriched by things, what like that can make him in such a great sense their owner? Above all

5. *By holding a true relation to Christ he becomes possessor of all things* (Rom. viii. 17; Rev. iii. 21).—*Adapted from H. Martyn, "Homilist," Third Series*, ix. 270.

Ver. 10. "*Poor, yet making many rich.*"—Then want of money is not the greatest, nor an insuperable, hindrance to the success of the Gospel. Else would not He have left the gold-mines a legacy to the Church? There is a something which the Church may have, which will enable it to do the work with little or no money.

I. "**The triumphs of the first ages were won by men** too *poor* to claim a home. . . . The days of the Church's temporal poverty were the brightest days of its victories. Never did the chariot of the Gospel move on with such celerity and stately moral grandeur, as when it rolled on undrawn by golden chains."

II. **Without this something money will be of no service.**—"Money can

only give machinery; . . . a great deal more, already, than is used. Money is constantly creating new machinery and tinkering the old; so that we hear more of the creakings of the human engines in the Church than of the flowing and the soul-stirring music of a Divine life. Money can only do for religion what it can do for art,—it can furnish the paint, the brush, the studio; but the genius, to create a breathing beauty on the canvas, it cannot supply. The true evangelising genius [and the power of the Holy Ghost], without which Churches, colleges, books, [committees, Church legislation, organisation] are so much cumbrous machinery, no wealth can purchase."

III. **The constant cry for money indicates the want of this necessary something.**—"Real love is communicative. . . . The office of love is always that of a priest, evermore presenting itself at the shrine of its object. Don't ask me to give to objects I love; I can't help it—love will communicate."—*Extracted from a longer sermon on* 1 Cor. ix. 12 *by Dr. Thomas,* "*Homilist,*" v. 154, 155.

Ver. 10. Cf. "*Such as I have give I thee*" (Acts iii. 6).

I. **How much the world owes to Christianity!**—Some of its noblest art inspirations and ideals; some of the most elevated and true principles of a real, healthy Socialism; some of its best thoughts about God and about morals. It has given a very real "culture" to the lowest, and otherwise "dangerous," classes, whom nothing else would have reached or saved from narrow, gross animalism of life and practice. Its thoughts and hopes about God and Christ and salvation and eternity must be acknowledged to be grand, enlarging, ennobling, if even they be not accepted as true. The life of an artisan or a slave in Corinth could not be mean, base, or dangerous to society, where the teachings and life of Christianity were truly apprehended and exemplified. "The stone which the builders rejected," even many of themselves now acknowledge to have been "the head of the corner." Christ's religion is the needed completion of all science; of all education; of all personal character. "Not even now would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue, from the abstract to the concrete, than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life" (John Stuart Mill, *Essays on Religion,* 253-255).

II. **How much a Church often owes to its godly poor!**—These are worth, in many ways, all the money and the ministrations spent over them. They keep sympathies tender and active, which might else die for lack of objects on which to spend themselves. They keep the Church life from growing sordidly rich, or hard and worldly; they exemplify another style of "wealth," constantly reminding their "more fortunate" fellow-members that there is another, larger, worthier life than that which "consisteth in the abundance of the things which a man possesseth." Happy the wealthy Church which has many poor members to whom Wordsworth's words may be applied:

> "How oft high service is performed within
> When all the external man is rude in show,—
> Not like a temple rich with pomp and gold,
> But a mere mountain chapel, that protects
> Its simple worshippers from sun and shower."
>
> —*Prelude,* book xiii.

How much of blessing does a Church owe to those who can only contribute their ceaseless prayers to the Church's wealth!

III. **How much, in a similar way, does personal character often owe to contact with a poor, but pious Christian life!**—The Christian servant is made an unspeakable, eternal blessing to the master or mistress or to the children, [and perhaps through one of these to a whole generation or age; *e.g.* how many did the Christian servant "make rich" who led to Christ the child

who became "Lord Shaftesbury".] The rich visitor gets more from the sick sufferer, of ripe grace and bright patience, than the "money's worth" of what is given in charity! How many will have to say, "My life is richer, infinitely, than it was, since I knew ——," viz. some poor saint of God.

Ver. 10. "*Poor, yet making many rich.* Then—

1. *The Gospel is a system intended to enrich men.*—Some systems of religion impoverish mind, body, estate. They invade a man's secular rights, and extort the product of his labour; blind his spiritual sensibilities, fetter his intellect, warp his judgment, ruin his soul. The Gospel enriches the soul with noble thoughts, high purposes, elevating hopes; with Divine fellowship, purity of heart, harmony of being. This soul-wealth is inalienable; it becomes part of the man; *Omnia sua secum portat;* it is a treasure laid up in the imperishable heavens of his spiritual being. Its value is absolute; for all worlds and ages, for time, for eternity.

2. *It enriches man through the agency of "poor men."*—Of *men.* The treasure is put into earthen vessels. The man who really receives the Gospel, moreover, becomes at once a willing agent to communicate. Of *poor* men. The *poor* can, and in fact do, receive the Gospel to a greater extent than any other class. The Saviour, opening His commission at Nazareth, declared Himself anointed—made a Christ—specially that He might preach the Gospel to the poor. There is no special decree indeed which places a barrier before any one class; the door of mercy is thrown open to all. It is that the influence of worldly wealth biases the heart against the true riches. The poor can become morally rich. And it is a more glorious fact that they can *propagate* the Gospel which enriches them. The Master and His fishermen-disciples were its first missionaries; and in all ages some of its finest theologians, organisers, missionaries, pastors, have sprung from the ranks of the poor. We see, then,—

I. **The kind of instrumentality on which the diffusion of God's Gospel necessarily depends.** — It manifestly does *not* depend on legislative enactments, worldly influence, high culture, great literary attainment. It can use these; it puts their highest honour upon them by using these; their chief glory is to serve the Gospel of Christ. Certainly not even money is indispensable. It may be well, and nobly, used; but Paul could dispense with it. It can provide the men, the means, the machinery, for the work. With these —but without these, if need be—the man filled with the Spirit, burning with love to Christ, taught of God, walking in all holiness, though he may speak no language but his own, and even that imperfectly, has the power to propagate the Gospel.

II. **No Christian man is freed from the obligation to diffuse the Gospel of God.**—Even the poor man is not. He may not in over-diffidence dream of devolving what even he *can* do, upon the rich or wise or great. The responsibility of wealth, of leisure, of education, is very great; they who have these must give account for five talents. But the poor man must be a faithful servant with his one. The poor can "make many rich"; then their ability is their responsibility.

III. **There is no ground for self-gratulation upon success.**—When the poorest and simplest men prove capable of achieving the grandest spiritual results, there is no alternative but to trace success to God. And then from such instances we learn to eliminate from all combinations of contributary causes, God's power, as the primary and essential cause. The men in all ages who have been most successful in imparting spiritual riches, have always been distinguished by their self-abnegating spirit. Then—

IV. **This highest honour is within the reach of all.**—What higher honour than to be the human instrument in the regeneration of a soul? Even to

awaken and train a sleeping intellect is great. The patient, skilful love which put the deaf, blind, mute Laura Bridgman into real communication with a world in which she lived, but which seemed hopelessly shut off from her, was no mean glory to Dr. Howe, of Boston, U.S.A. But to awaken a soul to a desire after God; to bring it into touch with the surrounding, but unknown, spiritual world; to bring it definitely into the possession of Christ,—is the highest honour, and fills him who accomplishes the task with the purest, grandest joy which a man can taste outside heaven's gate. To make a beggar, orphan, lost soul the happy possessor of "the unsearchable riches of Christ," the happy child of the Divine Father, recovered from the initial, present death and ruin of sin, is an honour angels might covet. But it is granted to men only: "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." It has been again and again granted to *poor* men. All *necessary* ministrations of man to man are level to the ability of every man to render. This *most necessary* ministration is open to every man who is himself a happy possessor of the kingdom within his own soul.

V. **Happily then we may hope for the universal diffusion of the Gospel.**—For suitable instruments, at least in one particular, are sure to be always available in plenty; there will at least never be any dearth of men who are qualified to say, "*As having nothing.*" If, too, it had depended on a learned caste, or a wealthy class, or a political power, there might have been justification for a priesthood, an oligarchy, an Establishment. To spread the Gospel, in the first instance only *needed* men who had little, or none, of such accompaniments and accessories to their work. And the Gospel can use them or can dispense with them still.—*In part adapted from "Homilist," New Series*, iv. 217.

## *HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.*

Ver. 2. *Now;* because—

I. **The business is urgent: Finding God's salvation.**—Enter some Galilæan village in the Spring of A.D. 27 or 28. Whole village astir. Everybody in the streets. Some hobbling along on crutches; some tottering and shaking with palsied limbs, glad to lean on some stronger arm; some blind, groping their way as if in midnight darkness; some *minus* a limb altogether; some with withered limbs that hang stiff like dead branches on a living trunk; some dragging themselves wearily; some borne on their little mattress-"bed" by sturdy bearers. A field day of the cripples and the sick of that Galilæan village! What does it mean? Why all converging to one particular house? Or, the Passover of A.D. 29. Crowds throng every high-road in Palestine. One largest company of pilgrims, like a living flood, reaches, rolls through, and soon leaves, Jericho. A shady nook near the city gate; a beggar—two—blind Bartimæus and his companion. They hear the crowd. They learn the cause. Spite of the hushing of bystanders, again and again before the Chief Pilgrim reaches them, their shrill cry is raised: "Son of David! Son of David!" Those are "seeking the Lord *while He may be found.*" These latter are "calling upon Him *while He is near.*" The business is urgent. Try to detain one of those cripples or blind men with a good story; tempt him to turn back with you for a good dinner or a handful of money. Not he! It is only sinners who commit the folly of suffering themselves to be detained or diverted from Christ by some tempting amusement, by sensuous enjoyment, by worldly business. The bystanders sought to hush down the beggars. As pride, or shame, or fear, or social or domestic pressure put on, would suppress or silence the demonstrative concern and the unconventionally

urgent outcry of a guilty soul, which wants Christ's help. "No; I cannot tarry for you. I cannot hush for you. Until I have made this sure, I have no ear, no leisure, for anything else. What must I do to be *saved*? Leave me to find Christ!" Bunyan not drawing a fancy picture when he makes Christian flee "at full stretch" from City of Destruction, fingers in ears, crying, "Life! Life! Eternal Life!" He had known it himself. Every man under the Spirit's conviction of sin knows how urgent the business.

II. **The time is fitting.**—*Every stage of life* is; youth; opening manhood and womanhood; maturity of strength and prime of vigour or beauty of character; days of waning power, but of sobering thought and heart. No age to which this present salvation is not congruous. Early morning, rising noon, fulness of afternoon light and warmth, evening's chastened daylight; all are right times. But *the earliest is the best.* Religion never unsuitable; becomes a man at any stage of life. Life wants its final touch of completeness and beauty, so long as it has not this. "Comes harder" at each later stage. Numa Pompilius and the Sibylline books.

III. **The circumstances are favourable.**—Particularly the primary condition of all. *God says "Now."* He is pledged to "Now," but to no other time. On this word a soul may plead: "Remember *this* word unto Thy servant, in which Thou hast caused me to hope."

IV. **The opportunity is limited.**—1. *True of nations, so far as history can be read with human eyes.* They have their "day of salvation" (Luke xix. 44). Perhaps, *e.g.*, we may think that France knew not of its "now" opportunity in the sixteenth century, when Reformation activities and life and grace were neglected and finally put away in massacre and murder. 2. *True of individuals.* May not limit the power and freedom of God's grace *further* than He limits it. But the complete offer of the Gospel always includes, expressly or by implication, a limit to the availableness of the offer. *E.g.* in Isa. lv. 6, 7, referred to above. Men may seek when He is not to be found, may call when He is not near. A limit seems irrevocably placed sometimes. Thus: Man co-operates with God in this "*salvation*," by repentance and faith. What then of the senile decay of mind which seems to make the very conception of repenting and believing no longer possible, and which makes it impossible to arouse attention for the very name of Jesus? What of the breathing, but paralysed body and hopelessly senseless brain, to which the minister is sometimes asked to come in to offer prayer beside it? What of the fixed habits, the world-indurated heart, impervious to, impracticable for, man's appeal, and from which the very Spirit of God seems "grieved" away? Let it be noted that this closing of the opportunity is never in this life a matter of the mere (arbitrary) will of God. As in salvation, so in this limitation,—whenever it occurs,—man has co-operated with God, and has by his own choice and act contributed to it. [Also: "Now" in "Remember now thy Creator," etc., must not be emphasised if the appeal is being made to the young. It is only the particle of entreaty, and is not temporal in sense.]

Ver. 2. *God hath spoken once; yea, twice have I heard Him.*"

I. **An offer twice repeated.**—A "*time of acceptance*"; a "*day of salvation.*"

II. **A double summons to attention.**—"*Behold*"; "*behold.*"

III. **A double indication of time.**—"*Now!*" "*now!*"—[*J. L.*]

Ver. 2. *A Present Salvation.*

I. It **needs** to be; you want it *now.*

II. It **ought** to be; God offers it *now.*

III. It **may** be; all things are ready *now.*

IV. It **must** be; to-morrow is not yours.—[*J. L.*]

Vers. 4-10. "*Approved*" [N.B. not

the frequent Pauline word in, *e.g.*, Rom. xvi. 10] *Ministers of God.*

I. **Their work.**
II. **Their trials.**
III. **Their conduct.**
IV. **Their consolations.**—[*J. L.*]

Ver. 7. *A Shield of "Triple Brass."*

I. **The word of truth defends a Christian's faith.**

II. **The power of God defends his experience.**

III. **The armour of righteousness defends his practice.**—[*J. L.*]

Vers. 11-13. *What shall we Ministers have, therefore?*

I. Ministerial **zeal.**
II. Ministerial **disappointment.**
III. Ministerial **recompense.**—[*J. L.*]

Then, further, the passage may be lifted to a higher plane. *Thus does God appeal to His people.* Their thoughts, views, hopes, life, experiences, are narrow. He would have them know, enjoy, a larger life and larger hope and liberty. The narrowness is in themselves, not in His heart or design or Gospel provision. They enter Canaan, indeed; but having taken their Jericho, and having won their first victories, they are content to camp about Gilgal; whilst "there remaineth much land to be possessed" (Josh. xiii. 1). Their enlargement, both of affection and receptiveness, is the "*recompense*" God desires, for all His "*enlarged*" heart of merciful design and provision for their well-being. Carey's motto: "Do great things for God; *expect great things from God.*" Bring a big vessel when you come to receive God's bounty. "Open thy mouth wide"—*i.e.* "sitting a guest at His table, let Him dip His hand in the dish, and, in token of favour and honour, give thee a large portion into thy opened mouth."

## CHAPTER VII.

### *CRITICAL NOTES.*

Ver. 1. **Therefore.**—This verse a branch broken from vi. 16-18. This word is like the jagged fibres which tell of the violence, and point back to the parent stem. **Having.**—Observe, the *evangelical* generalising of the scope of, and ownership in, these Old Testament sentences (see Appended Note). **Cleanse ourselves.**—"Deliverance from sin, although . . . God's work in us, is yet obtained by our own moral effort and our own faith. It therefore depends upon ourselves whether we are made clean." (Beet.) Beet adds: "The *aor. subj.* exhorts us, not to a gradual and progressive, but to a completed, cleansing *from all defilement.* So Eph. iv. 22, 25; Col. iii. 5, 8; 1 John i. 9." **Spirit.**—Observe, even the Godward, most Godlike part of our (tri-partite) nature may be "defiled." **All filthiness.**—As usual in St. Paul, "*all*" is "All kinds, types, aspects, degrees, of," etc. Not this or that one particular pollution. Cf. condemning "sins we have no mind to," excusing those "we're most inclined to." A very subtle temptation is this moral partiality when we are cutting off our sins. [We "spare the best of the sheep and of the oxen," etc. (1 Sam. xv. 3, 9).]

Ver. 2. **Receive.**—*Verbally* distinct from vi. 17; related in suggestion. R.V. has "*open your hearts to us*"; cf. vi. 11-13 and Acts xx. 3. See how Paul repeats Samuel's challenge of old (1 Sam. xii. 3) (cf. also John viii. 46). As to these charges against Paul (perhaps not very distinctly formulated, but rather gathered from hints, and from their bearing towards Titus), see under xii. 16-18. **Corrupted.**—Perhaps not stronger than in 1 Cor. iii. 17.

Ver. 3.—Observe, "I" begins here in the Epistle. *Ye . . . in our hearts.* Cf. the curiously (grammatically) ambiguous sentence, Phil. i. 7. Stanley compares Horace: "Tecum vivere amem, tecum obeam libens."

Ver. 4. **Boldness.**—Reverts to iii. 1—iv. 6, particularly iii. 12. "To them he speaks without reserve strong words of warning; to others he speaks about them glowing words of joy and confidence" (Beet).

Ver. 5.—"Observe, "*even*" (R.V.); the "*afflictions*" of "Asia," i. 8-11 —the story of which is

continued up to Troas, in ii. 13—were not at an end even when he crossed over into Macedonia. **No rest.**—Cf. ii. 13. "*Rest*" in the sense of the unstringing of a bow, or of the strings of a lyre; "*no relief* from the constant tension" (2 Thess. i. 7). **Fightings.**—Human opponents, unknown to us (cf. 1 Cor. xv. 32). **Fears.**—One can bear anything from without, if only the heart be light; but to have *fears* within!

Vers. 6, 7.—Observe, the Father a Paraclete, as in i. 4 [making Paul in his turn a Paraclete to others]. **Cast down.**—Note (as in R.V.) an adjective—"*the lowly*"—not a participle. [The combination of "*affliction*," "*rest*," "*comfort by the* **parousia** *of* Titus," recalls 2 Thess. i. 7 again.] Observe, "*while*" he was telling his good news, and describing what he had seen at Corinth, the "*comfort*" with which Titus had left the city, was visibly renewed and intensified, to the added comfort also of Paul himself, who was already greatly cheered by the very presence of Titus with him. "*Longing*" for me; "*Mourning*" that you had grieved me, "*zeal*" to do my wishes.

Ver. 8.—"*Regret*" (R.V.) better than "*repent*" (A.V.). **My Epistle.**—Viz. 1 Cor. (v. 1-8).

Ver. 9.—**Sorrow** (like joy, or like self-denial) is of no moral worth in itself; only worth anything as a means to an end,—here "*to repentance*." Asceticism makes sorrow and self-mortification to be ends, of worth in themselves. **Receive damage.**—"*Suffer loss*" (R.V.); *i.e.* "Had their sorrow been without result, it would have been an injury, a small and undersigned one, caused to them by Paul. God designed [?] their sorrow to be a means of blessing, so that not even in the least degree they might receive injury from the Apostle." (Beet.)

Ver. 10.—Choose between (1) "*Repentance*," and (2) "*Salvation*," "*not to be regretted*." The play upon the word and thought turns the balance in favour of (1). Observe, "*the world*" can share in sorrow; God cannot sorrow. Hence "*the sorrow of the world*"; but "*sorrow according to* (the mind of) *God*."

Ver. 11. "**This . . . thing**, *viz.*, *that ye sorrowed*," etc.; "*carefulness*" not now so good a word as "*earnest care*" (R.V.); "*vehement desire*" same word as "*earnest desire*" (ver. 7); both give way to "**longing**" (R.V.). "*Carefulness*" is expounded in the six following particulars (as in Conybeare and Howson): "What eagerness to clear yourselves from blame, what indignation (against the offender), what fear (of the wrath of God), what longing (for restoration to Paul's approval and love), what zeal (on behalf of right and against wrong), what punishment of wrong." Somewhat differently, Stanley draws out a "conflict of feelings": "Self-defence (for their sin), self-accusation (against it), fear (of Paul's arrival), longing (for it), zeal (against the offender), punishment (of his sin)." More briefly Farrar: "Self-defence and indignation against wrong, and a fear and yearning toward me, and zeal for God, and punishment of the offender." Surely not (as some) that they had—even a majority of them—been *pure all along* in this matter; else his strictures were undeserved, or his informants had overstated the facts. Surely rather, approved themselves—manifestly showed themselves—to be *now clear* in the matter of the incestuous person.

Ver. 12. **His cause, etc.**—Viz. the father of the offender (1 Cor. v. 1). Cf. again, the many concurrent, consistent motives in chap. ii. See how one object out of many is stated so strongly as to seem the only object, and also how the conception of an object indirectly secured runs into that of an object distinctly contemplated. (Cf. Winer, *Grammar*, on ἵνα, Part III., § liii., 6.) Observe the change in R.V., on account of the reading which makes the first and second personal pronoun change places. For (1) the R.V. is the recurrence of the word in ver. 11; for (2) the A.V., the greater simplicity of sense; and "*unto you*" is in (2) superfluous, unless with some far-fetched idea that he desired to show to the Corinthians their truer, better selves *quâ* their feelings toward him.

Ver. 15.—Cf. their reception of Titus with that which Paul deprecated in the case of Timothy (1 Cor. xvi. 10).

Ver. 16. **I have confidence.**—Meaning not, "I trust in you," but, "I am now entirely reassured about you."

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verse* 1.

[1. Ver. 1 really belongs by all right to the preceding chapter, and in any continuous exposition should be taken along with it. There is no Divine inspiration about the division of the Bible into chapters and verses. Indeed, there seems sometimes to have been a very sudden failure of human "inspiration" about the apportionment of the matter into such sections. 1 Cor. xi. 1 plainly belongs to chap. x.; the new paragraph before us as plainly commences at ver. 2. This verse is just a summary conclusion drawn from several Old Testament promises to Solomon and to Israel, in which Paul, taught by the guiding and

illuminating Spirit of God, sees promises for every man who has become a son of God by his faith in Christ Jesus,—every man of the spiritual Israel.

2. The gist of these promises is that men may be admitted into *the Favour, the Family, the Fellowship, of God.* "I will be their God; they . . . My people." "I . . . their Father; they My sons and daughters." "I will be to them an indwelling God; they shall be, soul and body, a temple for Me." Dominion and defence on God's side; obedience and reverence and love on man's side. Indeed, love on both sides; fatherly on this, filial on that. Then comes the indwelling, bringing illumination, purity, and glory.

3. And as Paul remembers what these Corinthians had been, his heart is kindled and glows within him, as promise after promise rises to his view and is dictated to his amanuensis. He found them without God, almost at the farthest remove from Him of all the heathen world. Yet, "I will be their God; they shall be My people." A few years before he had found them utterly unholy; unlike, and hateful to, a holy God. Yet here is an offer: "I will be a Father to them; they, the wretched and vile, shall be My—**My**—sons and daughters." Their hearts had been the temples of indwelling devilry; they should become the shrines of indwelling Deity.

4. "*Having therefore these promises,*" *etc.* [Illustrate by the advertisements of unclaimed dividends; of articles found for which owners are wanted; the tempting lists of heirs wanted for unclaimed estates. So] shall these promises, these so great blessings, such fellowship with God, lie unapplied for, unclaimed, unappropriated? Shall the "sons of God" live beggars and in want, when all this is open, and "on offer"?

5. Only, all "filthiness of flesh and spirit must be put away." [This link of thought lies condensed into the one word "for," in 1 Pet. i. 16, where God's holiness is the foundation reason for the holiness of His people. The "for" may be read: (1) *Vindicate your sonship;* show the family likeness, the likeness to your Father. "Ye shall be, . . . *because* I am." (2) "*Let us have fellowship.* I want it; your heart needs it. But there can be none unless ye are holy "*for* I am holy." (3) "*Do not force Me to withdraw from the fellowship.* Put away sin, or I must. Ye shall be, . . . for I am," etc.]

6. "*Flesh*" and "*spirit*" is only *a quasi-popular statement* of an all-inclusive range of requirement. Perhaps, if any line of division is to be traced, it will be this: There are sins which depend upon a bodily organisation for their occasion and possibility, whereas there are many forms of sin which could as easily be, and actually are, committed by devils and the disembodied spirits of the lost.]

*Sorrow upon Sorrow; Comfort upon Comfort* (vers. 2-7, 13-16).

I. **Sorrow upon sorrow.**—1. An apostle is himself "in heaviness through manifold temptations" (Jas. i. 2). No man certainly had a richer Christian life than he. No man understood more fully than Paul how "the peace of God—passing understanding—could guard the heart and the thoughts, through Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 7). No man more fully accepted and embraced the truth that "All things work together for good." Surely no man was more entirely lifted above all self-centering of life than he who said, "Neither count I my life dear unto me," etc. (Acts xx. 24). Yet he is deeply "moved" by the experiences of these painful months. This Second Epistle is an itinerary, where every step of the way is connected with trouble. This Apostolic sower goes forth into the field of the world, with his seed basket of precious seed, weeping every step of the way he just now takes. Many adversaries at Ephesus; trouble there until he despaired of life (chap. i.); himself going about for weeks a man as good as sentenced to death, his life seeming to be worth no longer purchase than that of a condemned criminal; perhaps in poor health through excessive anxiety about

his Corinthian Church, certainly greatly distressed about the news he has received of the condition of that Church. And now he has made for himself a new anxiety, by sending his sharp letter of rebuke and disciplinary instruction, the nature of the reception of which is a very uncertain matter indeed. His departure from Ephesus has been precipitated by the riot of Demetrius and the guild of silversmiths, though he had intended in any case soon to finish his work at Ephesus (1 Cor. xvi. 8); at Troas he is so distressed about Corinth, and at not meeting Titus there with news from that city, that, restless in spirit, he cannot settle down to work, but with an anxious heart hurries across to Macedonia. And now even Macedonia is no asylum. There is no rest for his flesh there. "*Fightings without, fears within.*" Beset and burdened, he has almost come to the end of all strength. He is only just "not destroyed" (iv. 9). And to any man of sensitive honour, such suspicions or accusations as are suggested in ver. 1 will not be the least heavy burden. True his own conscience does not accuse him; before God he is clear; his reputation may be left with God. Yet it were folly to attempt not to feel such charges, unwelcome addition as they are to the distresses of the time. 2. Such *a sample case* is serviceable as *a standard of the possibilities* of Christian experience, for the comfort of many distressed children of God. Distressed most of all by the fear that their "heaviness" is dishonouring to God's grace and its keeping and sustaining power; afraid that they are grieving the Spirit of God by not so "rejoicing evermore" that, though perhaps sorrow be accumulated upon their head and heart, or though circumstances be such as to put faith and endurance to an uttermost test, or though they be alone, friendless, misunderstood by those who ought to know them and respect or love them, they are not lifted up to a level of insensibility to, of inaccessibility to, such "natural" considerations and feelings. "Ought they not to feel nothing?" they ask. Well, at any rate there was no such Stoical indifference in Paul; his was no American Indian insensibility to torture; no statuesque impassiveness, no matter what happened, blow heat, blow cold, be it sunshine or storm. Paul felt—felt keenly—with distressing, and almost killing, intensity; and showed it too. His heart hungered for human sympathy. The days seemed terribly long till Titus came! "Ought not a Christian man to be able to disregard all human opinion, whether censure or praise; to care nothing whether men understand him or not, so long as the Master smiles upon him?" At all events, Paul was no such cast-iron, machine-made man with a merely mechanical heart, to which everything was simply a matter of indifference, and which, with unaffected regularity, went rigorously on with its beating, as the man might do with his work. The possibilities of grace are unspeakably large. The peace of God might "keep" us, with a power too seldom even apprehended by the people of God. Most of them set the standard too low, and hope for too little; and they live lower than even their low standard, and on a more narrow scale than even their meagre hopes. Yet exaggerated expectations are an evil and a mischief. Grace is above nature, and lifts nature up gloriously; but it works through nature. It does not dehumanise the saint. Neither Paul, nor Paul's Divine Master, was indifferent to pain. Nor does God expect His people not to feel. He is entirely reasonable (to use a human word) in what He expects from them. Heaviness is one thing; darkness is another. The lowliest child of God need never come into darkness. "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness." An apostle may be in heaviness. And no fulness of gifts or grace will, or need be expected to, exempt a man from feeling and smarting and sorrowing. [All will be bright and warm and "tight" within, yet the storm that howls around the house and thunders against the barred door and tightly closed shutters will not be a matter of indifference when its mighty force makes the very house

tremble to its foundations, until more than a passing fear visits the heart of those who cheer themselves with its fire and light, lest their very shelter should after all fall about their ears. And if "fears within" seem to make it hard to keep the fire blazing and the lamp burning!] The storm will indeed not disturb the deepest depths of "the peace of God," but its "surface" commotion may go far down. There will be a holy of holies of peace and security within a Paul, into which no foot of distressing circumstance shall ever intrude; but all the outer courts of the temple of the humanity may, for a while, be in possession of an overwhelming mob of anxious, distressing thoughts. 3. *Yet there is a limit* beyond which these shall not pass. [Weights may be heaped upon the strong steel spiral spring until it snaps, or at least until its elasticity is gone, and until there is no resilient power left when the pressure is removed.] "Sorrow upon sorrow," but there is a *ne plus ultra*. [Cf. Phil. ii. 27 for a beautiful case in point.] All but up to the breaking-point, but never beyond it. "My feet had well nigh slipped;" *well nigh*, no more. The night may darken, and darken, and darken; bad in Ephesus, no better in Troas; no relief in Macedonia. But the light comes at last; Titus comes, for one thing. There is always a daybreak to a man of God (Ps. cxii. 4). They who wait, even "out of the depths," watching "as they who watch for the morning," watch for what is *certain to come*. An apostle, as well as many a humbler member of the great Church of Christ, may be brought, pushed, driven, to "man's extremity." But never beyond! As we see here.

II. **Comfort upon comfort.**—1. The Lord of Paul's life knew the limit of the endurance of His servant. He knew him no Stoic, but keenly sensitive; he saw him on the rack in his anxiety about Corinth; he understood the hungry longing for friendship, and the not unworthy desire for the favourable judgment of the Corinthians themselves (ver. 2). Titus came; even to have him back was comfort; Paul's affectionate nature made him greatly dependent upon human friendships. Then Titus brought good news; the strain of these long weeks upon Paul's spirit was off, the tension was relaxed, in a moment. In the reaction and revulsion of feeling, he is overflowing with an exuberant sense of relief, of joy about Corinth, of affection for his people there; indeed, he is proud of them! (vers. 3, 4). Not that the surrounding "*tribulation*" is any less, or less real; but he is "*exceeding joyful in the midst of it.*" Nor is this all. Whilst Titus is telling him the good news,—how well himself had been received as representing Paul, how they "*longed*" to see Paul also, how deep had been the "*mourning*" over wrong-doing, whose aggravated evil, and their own complicity with which, they had hardly appreciated until Paul's stern letter gave them an "outside" view of it (ver. 7),—his face glows whilst he "*recalls*" it (ver. 16); it gives him renewed "*comfort*" to remember and to tell of the "*comfort*" he had received at Corinth. And it is comfort—added comfort—to Paul to see Titus so gladdened. "He rejoices with him that doth rejoice" (ver. 12). Yet more, all his misgivings and fears about Corinth are gone. He is entirely reassured about them (ver. 16). Now he only wants one thing more, and "his joy will be full": will the Corinthians not open their hearts to make him room? Love lives and makes its home in other hearts. And we may believe that the "God of all comfort" did not deny His hard-pressed servant even this. 2. "*Sorrow upon sorrow; comfort upon comfort;*" that is always God's rule, and the latter half of it obtains as certainly and as universally as the former. Need and supply always are kept at the same level. There is neither sense nor faith in a pessimist view of the world or of one's own life. And the measure of the comfort is no stinted or meagre one. "*I am exceedingly joyful.*" "My cup runneth over." God's rule for man's dealing with man is what has first of all been His own rule in dealing with man: "Good measure, pressed down, running over" is dealt into the

bosom (Luke vi. 38). There is also neither sense nor grace in clinging to the memory of sorrow. "Thou shalt remember thy misery as waters that have passed away" (Job xi. 16). But when the flood has subsided there is no need to nurse the sorrow of the days of inundation. Be natural. Be thankful for the comfort. [Archbishop Trench's poem, in Appended Note, may be useful.] 3. *The capacity for keen sorrow* like this of Paul is the price to be paid—the penalty—of a finely made humanity. Yet they need not be envied who pass through life incapable of woe; to whom nothing seems greatly to matter. They have their price to pay too; they are incapable of the comfort upon comfort. The very avenues which permit the assault and entrance of invading pain give access also to the relieving forces which bring God's comfort. 4. The heart full of Christ, and that loves His appearing, will catch at *the suggestion of the word "parousia,"* used by Paul in regard to Titus's arrival (ver. 6). As Paul longed for Titus, as there are days coming when, as never till then, even in the days of sharpest, darkest tribulation, the hearts of the faithful Church shall look longingly for the coming of Jesus. [2 Thess. ii. 6, 7 has the "tribulation" and the "rest" of this passage. And—it may be only a coincidence—this passage was written from Macedonia, perhaps from Thessalonica itself.] The night will have worn away until the "third watch" (Luke xii. 38); the servants listen with strained eagerness for any sound of His approach. For, strangely, the sub-final times are not by any means times of faith and of favour for the Church, but of persecution and of daring blasphemy against "all that is called God or is worshipped." Never so dark a night for the Church as that which is broken in upon by the sudden, lightning-quick (Matt. xxiv. 27), flashing, blinding glory of the Dawn of His Appearing and Presence. Sorrow upon sorrow until that moment. The few faithful ones can hardly hold their footing amidst the rushing flood of persecution and unbelief and distress. But in a moment, more welcome than Titus to the strained heart of Paul, **He** comes, and "God, who comforteth them that are cast down," shall give "*rest.*" The crisis is then for ever past; the tension is eternally removed; the "*fightings*" cease; the "*fears*" are swallowed up in "*exceeding joy.*" And may a loving fancy venture to carry the parallel so far as to sketch out moments of happy, privileged intercourse, which shall repeat the joy which Paul caught from Titus' face so full of comfort? Any hours of converse, when the face of the servants shall light up with new comfort, as they hear and see the Master's own complacent satisfaction in the remembrance of the welcome given Him, by the few faithful ones who were waiting for Him amidst a world of unfaithful or revolted ones? This, however, is for the reverently imaginative heart, rather than for the preacher.

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 8—12.

*The Purification of a Church.*—This is accomplished—

**I. By Paul's disciplinary action.**

**II. By a thorough Church repentance.**

I. 1. It was *the sharp, stinging stimulant, applied* not from any love of giving pain, but *to arouse the sluggish Church life* and Church conscience into healthier activity. Which is exactly the purpose of all the chastening of God. All pain which He now sends is disciplinary, and, if it may be, reformatory. By-and-by pain shall be—not vindictive, but—calm, righteous, simple execution of penalty and sentence, upon persistent, impenitent violators of law. Paul's action had in it the parental pain of giving pain to those who, even in their wrong-doing, are beloved (ver. 8). Touchingly natural is this confession of Paul that, after his letter had been despatched he could have wished he had not despatched it. Like

the heart of God [we might say that Paul's writing, its motive, its result, were, like the Corinthian sorrow, "after the mind of God" (*κατὰ Θεόν*)], in its measure did his heart yearn over Corinth. If less of pain, if words less severe, might have served the purpose, how gladly would he have taken the tenderer course, and abated his paternal sharpness! ["God *loved* **the world**" (John iii. 16); where it should be remembered how "the world" has always an ethical colouring in John's writings. It is not merely the human race in its entirety which God is said to have loved, but the "worldly" world, as John and Paul have taught us to speak. In its worldliness, and in its antagonism to God, He nevertheless "*loved*" it.] Paul loved Corinth, even when he was threatening "a rod," and the exercise of his powers of miraculous punishment. 2. When *Paul's letter* had served its immediate turn, *its usefulness was not exhausted.* Hear what Paul saith to Corinth; hear what Christ saith to Ephesus and the rest; and, in all this, "*hear what the* **Spirit** *saith* **to the Churches**" (Rev. ii., iii.). The written Word is the admonitory, didactic, comforting, stimulant, disciplinary letter to the larger Church, of every land and of all time. 3. *A conjoint motive appears.* "*Not for his cause,*" etc. It seems narrower, personal; but it is not an unworthy one. The letter would make it "*appear*" clearly, even to the most perverse and factious Corinthian who said, "I am of Cephas," that although Paul had been a long time away from them, his heart was unchanged, his interest in them had not diminished, his "*care for them*" was still real, and was felt as a real burden of obligation lying upon him. For he bore the obligation to care for them as "*in the sight of God.*" Whether they gave it recognition or not, God did. Yet he was not above desiring that it should be recognised by them also. Why not? It would be happier for his own sake if he thought that they understood his disciplinary sternness. And the letter would have a greater chance of accomplishing its object, if it were seen to come from a heart which cared for them even in the fact of writing it. [Even the most narrowly restrictive commands of God are "for our good alway" (Deut. vi. 24). They are proofs of His "care for us."] *Had he no thought for the wrong-doer as well as for the suffering father-in-law?* Yes; but an act is never in man [it is in an animal, or in a child hardly come to a stage beyond that of mere impulse] the result of one single, direct, uncombined motive; it is, speaking in mathematical phrase, the *resultant* of many motives. It is, further, in the inscrutable mystery of the co-working of the two free volitions, the human and the Divine, always full of the purpose and will of God. Sometimes the one motive may, with perfect truth, be so insisted upon, that for the time it eclipses or casts out any other; or the Divinely secured result may be so fully in view, that the human motive and purpose may sink out of sight in comparison. 4. "Corporations have no conscience;" so it is said, in half pleasantry. But the Church corporate has, and a responsibility, and it may have a corporate sin in that it tolerates sin in its midst, and may fall into a corporate indifference on all moral questions. The letter of Paul, the written Word of God, stands out an objective standard of unalterable force, an abiding rebuke or an awakening cry, and an abiding witness to the care which cannot simply or indifferently look on while good is slackening in its hatred toward evil, or is itself becoming corrupted. The sharp surgery of the excising-knife which cuts off Ananias and Sapphira, is God's care for His Church, that it should be holy, and should share and keep His own sensitiveness to sin.

II. **A Church repentance**—*the disciplinary action of a Church upon itself.* —1. A very healthy and successful issue. The physician succeeds best when he can awaken or stimulate the recuperative force of the body. That Church life is healthiest which "*cleanses itself from all filthiness*" that may have gathered around its corporate life, and which indeed cannot bear persons or things that

are evil (Rev. ii. 2). The true discipline of the Church is that which grows out of and expresses the revolt of the Church conscience against evil. [The analogy between this and personal holiness is obvious and close. The healthiest holiness is the expression of a healthy moral *life*; personal holiness also may need the stimulus or the rebuke from the outside.] No discipline will long survive the weakening or decay of this. Discipline, like any other legislation, cannot be carried out far in advance of public opinion. The officials of a Church are but the pre-eminent exponents of its life. They lead the Church, indeed, or should lead it; but they are of it, and their disciplinary zeal will never far outrun the disciplinary life of the whole Church. The responsibility lies, then, upon each single member of a Church, to be himself so spiritual, and to keep himself in such a holy sensitiveness to sin, that his contribution to the collective moral standard is of the very highest. *Corporate holiness is co-operative personal holiness.* Each member is thus the guardian of the purity of the whole. That body is safest in the presence of infection, of which each component unit is in fulness of vigour and health. Paul's Epistle is, under God, a sharp tonic which, happily, arouses "*carefulness*" in this Corinthian Christian body. 2. *The details of the various phrases used by Paul* are given in the Critical Notes, above. The interpretation of some, as may be seen, is variously given by different readers of the Epistle. But the general drift is clear, and follows closely the lines of the repentance of an individual sinner. There is the same awakening of "*earnest care*," where there has been a mortal torpor, or indeed a criminal indifference. This awakened feeling is translated into prompt and decisive action, instead of being allowed to spend itself in mere "confessions," and in deprecations of Divine wrath; and, above all, the sorrow is "*after God*." There is "*a sorrow of the world*." The shame of sin before men is lamented; the sin itself before God is eclipsed by the shame; there is no real sense of sin. The consequences, rather than the evil character, of the act, are the only matter of regret. The world's sorrow turns away from God and the very thought of Him, and may easily harden either into a more hopeless indifference than before, or into a Judas-like despair; the true, "godly" affection turns the soul, with contrition, with confession, with appeal, with hope, to God. 3. And there is *a Church* "*salvation*." And for a Church as for the individual, there is no "salvation" where there has been no practical repentance. Joshua lay prostrate, in his grief that Israel seemed weak, and that six-and-thirty slain men of Israel lay on the steep path down from the gate of Ai. The answer of Jehovah came with startling definiteness: "Get thee up; wherefore art thou fallen upon thy face? Israel hath sinned" (Josh. vii. 10). There are times when it is of no use to go on confessing, or to go on praying; when the first thing is to go and seek out sin and to cut off the offender. If the Church is to be "*saved*," then the self-acting discipline of a life of real, intense, corporate godliness must be vigorously at work, whether under the stimulus of a Paul or not, and making a thorough "Church repentance."

## *SEPARATE HOMILIES.*

Ver. 1. *Promises, Purity, Perfection.*

**I. God's requirement in order to fellowship.**

**II. Our encouragement in seeking to fulfil it.**

I. **"Cleanse yourselves; perfect holiness."**—Put away *the sins* which are in plain contradiction to God's will; put away the *sin* which is in plain contradiction to His nature.

A. 1. *The principle of this, and the necessity of this, are seen in earthly friendships.*—Two cannot walk together unless they be so far agreed that each abstains from what he knows will offend the other. There can be no

association, no bond, where each disregards the feelings of the other, and does not hesitate to offend his prejudices; and, much more, if his practice traverse some of the principles dearest to his convictions. Indeed, if the connection is to be at all close and to be lasting, there must not only be this reciprocal self-denial; there will also need to be some similarity of tastes, opinions, habits, character. The two friends must not be copies of each other. The helpfulness of friendship lies just there, that each contributes something to the character of the other. Yet there must be so much in common that neither shall have to say, "I cannot make a friend of that man. His habits and tastes and whole disposition are an offence to me."

2. *All this holds as between men and God.*—Sins are the negative of His holy law; sin is the negative of the holiness of His nature. God and sin are light and darkness. To hold fast to worldly or sinful pleasures or associates, and to hope to be ranged amongst the sons and daughters; to hope to continue the prodigal life in the far country, or even to remain a swineherd and to eat the swinish husks, and yet to hope for the fulness of the complacent love of the Father and for the life of a son in the Father's home; is impossible on the very face of it. "The friendship of the world is enmity with God" (Jas. iv. 4). The words came indeed from that apostle who has the reputation of being the sternest moralist of them all, but they owe nothing to the presumed character of him who writes them; they simply lift up into the higher, the spiritual, region what men feel is inevitable in all human friendships. Everything must be put away which has about it even the suspicion of sin. "*Cleanse yourselves.*" *As he is*, the gutter child would never be taken, to put him at the table, amongst the children. With all their pity for his rags and misery, there is not a father or mother who would not shrink from his dirt and rags and depravity. They would insist upon the washing, and the clothing in decent raiment; upon the giving up of the old associates, the slang, the profanity, the pilfering. Not less must be expected of God. Decent people feel such a child vulgar, disgusting; God feels, as we cannot feel, man's sinful condition abhorrent. To feel less strongly, to abate His rigidity of requirement, would be to be untrue to Himself.

3. *The human heart was designed to be a temple;* but it cannot be a temple of two Gods jointly. Certainly no Christian heart can be like the private Pantheon of Alexander Severus, a temple of all the gods, *including Christ.* From the first moment of a man's seeking Him, and throughout the whole course of his Christian life, God's *sine quâ non* is, "All, or not at all." [The need of all this very patent in Corinth. A city exceedingly profligate in a profligate world. Old habits too strong for many young converts. Converts they were, but the heathen husband, or wife, or friend often led them astray. Thoughtlessly or ignorantly they continued, or fell back into, old habits and practices which entangled them, and compromised great principles; some were indulging in gross sin. Between them in their impurities and complicity with idolatry, and even in their party spirit, and the holy God, there could plainly be no lasting, perfect communion.] The average world of the member of a Christian congregation is widely removed, and for the better, from that of a Corinthian convert; but there are still sins of the flesh and of the spirit to be renounced. The temptation to idolatry in its coarsest forms is gone. The temptation to impurity or gluttony or drunkenness may be slight in power or rare in occurrence, with the members of an average congregation. Yet there is vanity in personal advantages, whether original or acquired; there is the widely inclusive group of sins called in the old Evangelical dialect "softness and needless self-indulgence"; there are sins of eye and tongue.

There is the heart's idolatrous love of the creature—wife, or child, or friend—more than the Creator; there is the worship of man's favour rather than God's. Covetousness is a sin far more seriously estimated in the New Testament—in the judgment of God—than in the customary estimate of even Christian judgment; it is utterly unlike that God Who is always giving, Who spared not His costliest, His very Only-begotten, for those who could give Him in return nothing which was not first His gift. There is pride, of all sins the most of the very nature of the devil; and anger; and uncharitableness; and indolence,—all "*sins of the spirit*" alone. These things, and the like, are defilements of the temple. If the heart be unwilling that these should be cleansed away, then the Holy God cannot consent to enter. If His house has once been "emptied, swept, and garnished," but these things are again being suffered, or perhaps encouraged, to accumulate, He cannot long remain, or fulfil such promises as are here.

4. "*Cleanse yourselves!*" — "I cannot." True, and not true. No native power is in any man, to put away sin; but in all men is something of grace, to work along with, and to work upon. Is the will by grace set upon the cleansing? Then the words mean: "Use the appointed means of cleansing; the fountain is open for sin and for uncleanness." If the man lying helpless by the side of the pool, desires to plunge in and be healed, then he has a gracious Helper near at hand to enable him. If God has awakened the will, He enables that will. He lays commands upon dead souls, and bids them "Arise," and "Come forth"; and with the word there goes life to obey. He must give, and does give, the will and the means to cleanse; His grace is in the resolving, and praying, and struggling, and lifelong watchfulness, and self-denial, and self-discipline. But a responsibility for all these is still upon men themselves. "*Cleanse yourselves.*"

B. *This is only the negative requirement. There is a positive one.* "*Perfecting holiness.*"—1. *The gutter child* not only consents to, and assists in, the stripping off of the old clothes, and the laying aside of the old street habits and talk and play and friendships, if he is to be adopted even into the service of the kitchen, and much more into the sonship of the drawing-room, but more is required of him. If he is to be a friend or a son, if there is to be any real communion between him and his adoptive parents, then day after day he must cultivate his mind, at least up to their standard; he must submit to, and co-operate in, a training of manners and habits; he must study the ways of those about him, until he loses all the low, mean mind of the street Arab, and becomes so thoroughly one of the new circle, that his very instincts are theirs. He must aim at copying the very mind of those who have made him their son.

2. Paul brings out man's *part in the sanctification of life.* In the progress of a Christian man's sanctification are two closely related, but perfectly distinct, elements—*the creation of holiness*, and *the cultivation of holiness.* The first God alone can effect; in the second man works together with God [though never without Him] under His guidance and relying on His help. The plant is not created full-grown. God never creates at a stroke the result of growth of character. He creates the seed in nature; He puts into it the inscrutably mysterious thing, Life. He creates what man must cultivate. Man must clear away weeds and give full play to all the genial influences of air and sun and rain upon the soil; man must guard the growing seed from injury, and must feed the plant, till it expand into full beauty of flower and fruit. The work of moral renewal is all wrought on the lines of the ordinary, natural laws of mind. To shed abroad in our hearts a sense of His love to us (Rom. v. 5) is directly and alone His. It is in accordance with the most ordinary and natural "law"

that this should call forth in us an answering love to Himself (1 John iv. 19). Only He can create the sense of His love to us. But the answering love which "naturally" springs up within us, is the seed-motive, and the seed-power, out of which may grow all the many-sided holiness of principle and of practice. It is man's business, then, to tend and cultivate this new and precious germ. He must pray for "the fruitful rain from heaven"; he must cleanse away all the choking weeds of habit or practice which, as matter of experiment or observation or instruction, he learns, do actually hinder the growth of this germ-like love, and help to keep his holiness a dwarfed and stunted thing. He must do his part to get a "*perfected*" plant.

3. *God's creation of love, and of perfected love, may be the work of a moment.* —The gracious communication of the fact of His own, and man's answering, grateful, love, may be a graciously "short work," in most perfect accord with the normal working of mind and heart. *Man's cultivation of this love* and its fruit will *fill a lifetime.* One of the earliest and most bitter lessons of a soul, full of its "first love" and striving to live like Christ the pattern, is to find that it is full of things which hinder the attainment of even its own standard of a holy life. The painter tries to copy the Face he loves, but at first has not the perfect mastery of brush and materials and *technique*, and he cannot embody upon the canvas what in his awakened artist mind he sees clearly enough. And when by-and-by artistic skill is perfected, and he can at once put upon the canvas all he sees, he will not stop there. No; his perception will grow finer; every day he will see more to see; he will find more in his Face—more beauty, new lines of character; there is no reason why he should not go on growing artistically, and go on "*perfecting*" incessantly the transcript of what he understands with ever more "*perfect*" insight, and with ever "*perfecting*" skill can fix in permanent record. So there are many "*perfect*" stages in this "*perfecting*" of holiness; there is no *ne plus ultra* stage of "*perfection.*" When full consecration on man's part has been met by full acceptance on God's part, and "a perfected love" has been given and awakened which "casts out fear" and the very principle of sin (1 John iv. 18), the work is not by any means done. The man has got rid of all within that hindered the copying of the Divine Pattern; the power is coming, has come, to put into life all he sees in his Bible and his Christ. But every day will still have its external hindrances; every day, moreover, will bring new insight into duty, new sensibility of conscience to sin, new views of God's will. And all these new discoveries must be put in; "*perfecting*" in the practical living what in germ God "*perfected*" in principle in the heart. It is one stage of "*perfection*" when the plant no longer grows a dwarfed and stunted thing, but healthy, symmetrical, beautiful, not a thwarted growth about it. There is still open an ever perfecting perfection year after year, of larger growth and more abundant fruitfulness; "your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Rom. vi. 22). The adopted gutter lad's new life will from the first spring out of his abounding grateful love to his new parent. So long as the old life has any charm for him, it will be hard work to bring himself to the new, though the love of his benefactor will be a perpetually operative force and assistance. Yet, when the love of the old life is gone, the work is not done; the training and the educating may go on without end, though more easily than before. The "*perfecting*" is never done.

4. Hence learn what in this business is the place of: "*In the fear of the Lord.*" It would be a long time before the lad would feel the confident security of a born son; for a long time he would always remember his true origin, and the wide interval that once was between his new parents and himself. He is in

their home by mere favour; unworthy conduct or disobedience might in a moment justly forfeit all. His sense of obligation would be a strong motive to obedience; and it might be an almost tremulous sense. The remembrance of the true footing on which he stands in the house, would be a check upon presumption and carelessness in fulfilling the wish of the benefactors to whom he owes so much. The little parable needs no explanation. It is the "reverence and godly fear" with which His people "serve God acceptably" (Heb. xii. 28). It is the fear in which they "*perfect their holiness.*" There is no such reverent love as "perfect love."

II. **Encouragements.**—If the fear is to be the guard, and even upon occasion the spur, the promises are to be a lure. Paul does not so much feel, "If we do not cleanse ourselves, we shall have no fellowship here or hereafter," as, "Here is an honour for sinners. Our heart should leap at the very thought of being Sons and Temples of the living God."

1. *In order to claim such promises.*—We cannot claim them without seeking to cleanse ourselves.

2. *Stimulated by such honour.*—We cannot, like Esther, *win* any love or favour by putting on any finest apparel of our own. But at least we should seek to *retain* favour by putting on the "best robe" our Father has given us. [Cf. 1 John iii. 3; though this strictly is in view of the Coming of Christ.]

3. *Staying our hearts on such promises.*—"We can, then, be clean; we can, then, perfect holiness in His fear." It is hard to think it, if men look at the world's sin, environing so closely; if they look at the average success, or failure, of other Christian men; if they remember how inadequately all their own effort and vowing and praying and determining have ended in the past; if they see how little others, even the most successful, sometimes hope for. They despond and despair. But let them look at Him and listen to His promises. He does not bid us climb to any *inaccessible* height if He calls at all. Long fight? Wearisome climb? Perhaps; but He does not simply sit on high and watch: "Come on, higher yet; I will receive you!" No; but at every point

4. *He gives help in obeying, in climbing, in cleansing ourselves, in perfecting holiness.*—[Prodigal lad in America not only hears from his father in England, "I will receive you; come home," but the father sends the passage money, that he may respond to the invitation.]

Ver. 10. *Sorrow, Repentance, Salvation.*—A quite general maxim, interjected into, growing out of, a special discussion. One of the standing *formulæ* of the philosophy of religion.

I. **Closely connected, but not by any means identical.**—Very vital and of practical necessity to keep them distinct. Deeply stirred feeling is by no means always part of, or a preliminary to, repentance, though true repentance always begins in "*godly* sorrow." Even "*godly* sorrow" is not "salvation." [There has always been preached in the Christian Church an "**only believe**" pattern of Gospel. Very popular often, and often very useful. It cannot be, therefore, wholly a false Gospel. But it is an imperfect one. It is the exaggeration, the unbalanced presentation, of a truth. It is right, and has its strength, here. The passage from condemnation to glory is through repentance to faith, and from faith, through all holiness of heart and life, to heaven. Faith which saves, thus stands guarded on the one hand by repentance, and on the other by holiness. There is no saving faith where there has been no sense of sin; there is no saving faith where a holy life does not grow out of "believing." But the repentance which prepares for faith does not save. The holiness which is the fruit of faith does not save. The penitent man is saved when he believes, and not till then. The holiest man living is saved as a sinner believing in Christ, and only as a believer. The

real penitent may be cheered by "Only believe." The holiest man needs cautioning, "Only by believing." "Only believe" is no message for the man who feels no "*godly sorrow*"; nor for the careless, or inconsistent, man who calls himself a Christian, but who is presuming on a past faith. "Only believe" is no medicine to be dealt out indiscriminately at every stage of spiritual sickness or spiritual recovery, valuable and exactly suitable as it is at a particular point. Similarly,] without ever being formulated into a distinct and express type of theology or preaching, there is an "**only repent**" Gospel. The natural heart always tends to find, and claim, merit in any right doing or right feeling. It seems natural to rest and to hope in the "godly sorrow." But it is "*unto salvation*," and only "*unto*." It works towards it. It leads a man towards it. It need not, and does not always, lead into it. It may, it is likely to, it is meant to, issue in his salvation; but that is all. Examine in more detail—

II. **Godly sorrow.**—Literally "sorrow *according to* God"; in contrast with the "sorrow of the world." [Dean Vaughan suggested, at a Greek Testament lecture, *me præsente*, H. J. F.,] "**God-wise, God-wrought, God-ward**"; after the *mind* of God; after the *manner* of God; *leading towards* God. 1. God's way of looking at sin, at everything, is different from the world's way; the standard, the standpoint, are different. God hates sin for its own sake; the world hates, is angry at, mourns over, its consequences. Accordingly "*godly*"—"*godwise*"—"*sorrow*" sees sin with God's eyes, measures by His standard, learns to hate with His heart; and this, even though sin be pleasant, or pay well, or be trivial, or "done by everybody." "*Godly sorrow*" makes a man grieve that he has sinned; the world, that sin has brought suffering. Even the abandonment of a sin is on different lines: this sorrow "*according to*" God's mind and heart loathes sin, and leaves it *because* it is sin; the sorrow of the world fears hell and the penalty of holding on in an evil way, and only gives up a sin as a captain may alter his course, and turn his vessel's head from a prize which he cannot capture, and which he may only attack or continue to pursue, to his own damage and perhaps destruction. 2. The difference begins here: it is *God-wrought*. Men take up some specially characterised piece of work, and say, "That is in So-and-so's manner." Or, "That shows the hand of a master workman." Or, "That speaks of great wealth of resource and invention." So, to look at a sample-case of "godly sorrow," so widely differenced from mere sorrow at the results of sin—to note its pattern (so to speak), its depth and thoroughness and abundant measure—is to say, "That shows the hand of God. That is His characteristic method and manner." A frivolous nature made serious; a worldling made to know the sin of mere worldliness; stolid indifference stirred to its depths with shame and fear; a hardened heart suddenly dissolving into tears of uncontrollable grief; a proud man openly bowing in confession that he is "a great sinner"; the high walls of pride of self, which have been the despair of preacher or godly friend, falling flat,—all the marvels of moral change, all the variants upon the one theme, "Repentance," make an observer say, "Only God's power could have done that! That sorrow is after God's manner of working!" Tell a man the right. Will he see himself wrong? Not at all of necessity. Conscience will find fifty "refuges of lies" [*i.e.* refuges which are lies, and delusions to the sinner himself (Isa. xxviii. 15, 17)], to be shelters from condemnation. The hard heart *will* not feel, or "fires up" at reproof. The subterfuges of conscience, the blindness and perversity of the judgment, defeat the human rebuke. Suddenly the veil is torn away which hid the man from himself. "Secret faults," so "secret" that they eluded the notice even of the man's own heart (Ps. xix. 12), are set in the condemning light of the man's own awakened judgment. He who could not be awakened

by the roughest shake or the loudest appeal, now is awake at a whisper; but it is a whisper of the voice of God's convincing Spirit. God has done it! "That is God at work!" 3. All through, then, this sorrow is *God-ward.* God is working to bring the soul to Himself. It is all "God, God, God" now. "I have broken *God's* law; I have sinned against *God's* love. What man thinks, or will do, is nothing. What will God think?" And the prodigal, who has "come to himself," next returns to his Father. [See this possession of the mind with the thought of God and God's holy displeasure in Ps. li. 4: "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight!" Had he not sinned, and that grievously, against the poor murdered Uriah? Or against Bathsheba herself? For what greater sin can man do against man than to tempt him to sin, and lead him into its committal? Or against his people? For it is a grave sin against the well-being of a nation when its very rulers do evil, with all the teaching power of their position and its great influence. Yes. But the godly sorrow has brought David into God's presence (ver. 11), to God's feet. He sees God, and hears. He is face to face with God. Man sinks back, is excluded, forgotten. Bathsheba, Uriah, Israel,—these are lost sight of. God fills all the field of vision, and of David's thought and fear. What man thinks,—that is nothing. What will *God* do? His sin has shut him up in a terrible isolation, a guilty soul alone with God. "**Thee** only!" *God-ward* sorrow.] He returns in some degree of hope. The "sorrow of the world" is oftener "despair." [We may add to Vaughan's analysis of the phrase] 4. Intensified by the worthier appreciation of God's holiness and patience and love. *Measured by these standards,* sin is exceeding sinful. On the background of these it shows out the more staringly, glaringly evil. "Against **Thee**!" means against such love as David had received from Jehovah. But especially does (3) approve the sorrow the genuine work of the Spirit of God. It moves God-ward in an active "repentance." A real repentance is always "repentance *towards God*" (Acts xxi. 21), just as conversion is "*turning to God*" (Acts xxvi. 20). ["Fruits meet for repentance;" "fruit worthy of repentance" (R.V. reading), Matt. iii. 8.]

III. **Repentance growing out of this.**—[This is not formally theological language. In the accustomed and necessary definitions of systematic theology, "*Repentance*" includes the "*godly sorrow*" in the ground it covers. But they may be distinguished.] The tree may be distinguished from the root; the root may be reckoned part of the tree. Paul's words only distinguish between what the penitent feels and what he does. The godly sorrow is first indeed to awaken, but it runs on side by side with the doing, until it is swept away in the "joy of God's salvation" (Ps. li. 12). The deeper the sorrow the more active the doing and the undoing. The exposition by Paul of his own term, given in ver. 11, is the pattern of a corporate, a Church, "repentance." But the repentance of a Church is traced on the same lines as the repentance of a soul. All feeling, unless it is translated, and that quickly, into action, evaporates, leaving the heart less susceptible, less easily aroused, than before. The new attitude of thought and view and feeling towards sin wants making permanent, wants making the concrete habit of the life. When godly sorrow goes no further than itself, and is not crowned by the salvation which is the designed goal, it will frequently be found that it has been arrested in its growth, and has never been suffered to take shape in the activities which Paul here groups under the word "Repentance." Penitent souls sometimes lose their godly sorrow, because they will not put away friend, or pleasure, or practice in business, which they see to be evil. The penitent, indeed, has not learned to triumph over heart sin (Rom. vii. 14-24); that victory belongs to the

man who has found salvation. But many a soul loses even the godly sorrow, because it will not "*clear*" itself from this friendship; or it listens to a plea for keeping that sin; sparing, instead of "revenging upon," itself; and, indeed, turning away from the light of the leading Spirit, from an uncomfortable misgiving that the road to which He invites, would lead to some very little welcome conclusions in the direction of putting away sin. "Not measure penitence by tears, but by grief. Grief not by sensitive trouble, but by hatred and avoidance of sin."

IV. **All this is only "preparing the way of the Lord.**—Note the two sequences: "*Sorrow to repentance*" (ver. 9); "*repentance to salvation*" (ver. 10). It issued in a corporate, Church salvation, at Corinth. But the *formula* is general. One gracious operation in the purpose and working of God, who loves to finish His work. [On all these topics we are at the very heart of the whole business of the Gospel and of Redemption. The minute study of this Divine directory of the practice of soul-healing, and the minute study of the ever-varying phases of the one spiritual process in the ten thousand "cases" which come under the notice of the spiritual physicians, have compelled an analysis of the "plan of salvation" which, when exhibited in a bare, tabulated set of results and doctrines, is to many moods and minds very repellent. But the urgency of the proved necessity has compelled an exact analysis of the relation between repentance and faith, and between both and salvation. Paul's *formula* is not, nor is intended to be, complete; he does not interject faith between repentance and salvation. [As in Acts xvi. 31, he said nothing about "repentance."] His analysis of the process is the dissection of the "living subject" before him in Corinth. The theologian is too often practising his dissection upon (what to him are) dead *dicta* of a Bible page. Indeed, a living thing is apt to die under the dissecting process. But the whole, co-ordinated teaching of the New Testament agrees with, and gives light to, and receives light from, the experience derived from an infinite variety of co-ordinated and closely studied facts, to make it clear that repentance only brings a soul to the threshold of the city of refuge, within which is "salvation." The one step which definitely takes a sinner over the threshold and into safety is the act of faith; of *penitent* faith always, that lays hold of Christ. *The whole penitent heart* is in the faith that saves. Without, in some sense, a faith that hopes for the mercy of God, repentance is despair, and may be a foretaste of hell itself. A degree of faith in God goes hand in hand with godly sorrow. But the faith that exactly and precisely saves, is that which lays an appropriating, desperately clinging hand on Christ.]

## *HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.*

Ver. 10. *Profitable and Unprofitable Sorrow.*—1. Paul suggests that not only had this Church sorrow done them no harm, but it had done them a service; *he* had done them a service in causing it (ver. 9). Sorrow is worth nothing in itself. Its value and its moral character are fixed by (1) the origin, and (2) by the issue of it. If God-wrought, and sanctified into a preliminary of salvation, it has been profitable.

2. *The world's unprofitable sorrow.*—(1) It plays only on the surface of the matter. It only understands *crime*. Its balances are not sensitive enough, the reagents of its spiritual chemistry are not efficient enough, to detect and appraise *sin*. (2) Its thought mounts no higher than man. Shame, vexation, mortification, annoyance at discovery, are often the world's "repentance." It tends to make a man careful only to guard against being betrayed into such sins as are liable to be found out. Hence its standard of judgment is my

personal convenience, or social convention. ["Bad form" is *the* unpardonable sin.]

3. *The sorrow that is after God.*—(1) *Sin*, as sin, is the trouble. See how in the night of Jacob's wrestling, as the struggle proceeds, Esau is lost sight of, and the one prayer is, "Tell me Thy Name." The day breaking brings the danger; no matter, "Let the day break, let Esau come, let him slay, let him take all, I will not let Thee go unless," etc. (2) It measures by God's standard, and scourges for what was not condemned at the time, or was only noted to be defended and applauded, but which now starts up, "**Sin!**" It is as grieved about secret, heart sins, as about overt acts, which nevertheless man might not know, or condemn if he did know. (3) It always leads to the putting away of sin. The people cried, "*Jehovah, He is the God!*" "*Then take the prophets of Baal; let not one escape.*" The soul whose repentance is to lead to salvation, must slay every prophet of the Baal-sin which has ousted Jehovah from His place in heart and life. Many a soul's godly sorrow evaporates, because the heart could not put away some one last thing, and simply turn to God.

4. *Repentance* **unto** *salvation.*—(1) No man is saved *because* he repents; he is not saved *unless* he repents. He who excuses himself excludes himself. (2) Repentance is the act of a poor fellow bitten by a fiery serpent in the wilderness, and fallen in his last agony with his back towards the serpent. Turn him over so that his glazing eye can look and he be healed. *Turning toward God in order to look to* His mercy in Christ, that is *repentance*; just as the "*look*" was essentially *faith*. The lame man can move no step of the way to God. God meets him. His Spirit is in the very desire to meet God and to win His peace. That desire is help given by the grace of God in Christ, preparing the soul to make an effort to draw near to God. It is John Baptist coming before Christ. Not always leading up to Christ. Pointing Jesus out, "Behold the Lamb of God," in order that the soul may go to Him and find rest. John Baptist *must* precede Christ. Repentance is the Old Testament stage of life, leading up to the New Testament, the Gospel, stage.

## *APPENDED NOTES.*

Ver. 1. Notice carefully that God's words to Israel in the wilderness and through Isaiah are *promises* now possessed by Christian believers. For God acts always on the same principles, and therefore His words to one man are valid for all in similar circumstances. Moreover, the Mosaic ritual and the Old Testament history are symbolic of the Christian life. God's visible presence in the midst of Israel was an outward pattern of His spiritual presence in the hearts of Christians; and the obligations which His presence laid upon Israel [*e.g.* in even a matter concerning the sanitation of the camp (Deut. xxiii. 13, 14)] were a pattern of those resting upon His people now. And when, through the pen of Isaiah, God called the exiles returning from the dominion of idolaters His sons and daughters, He taught plainly that in days to come He would receive as such those whom He rescued from sin. Indeed, the universality to believers of the favour of God in Gospel days makes His promise to David a promise of adoption for all believers.—*Dr. Beet.*

See Homiletic Analysis (vers. 2-7), II. 2.

"Oh, leave us to a world of sin, unrest,
And trouble, to be sad!"
I spake, and thought to weep,
A settled grief to keep,
When, lo, as day from night—
As day from out the breast of night forlorn—
So from that sorrow was that gladness born,
Even in my own despite.

Yet was not that by this
Excluded [cf. ver. 4]; at the coming of that joy,
Fled not that grief, nor did that grief destroy
The newly risen bliss,—

But side by side they flow,
Two fountains flowing from one stricken heart,
And ofttimes scarcely to be known apart—
That gladness and that woe.

And both are sweet and calm,
And flowers upon the banks of either blow,
Both fertilise the soil, and, where they flow,
Shed round them holy balm.
—*Archbishop Trench.*

# CHAPTER VIII.

## *CRITICAL NOTES.*

Observe: 1. viii. 1—ix. 15 is one continuous section, concerned with the *completion* of the Corinthian contribution to Paul's great Jerusalem Christian Poor Relief Fund. Mentioned 1 Cor. xvi. 1. where see for this Collection generally. 2. The section is characterised by a specialised use of χάρις (= *grace*, generally, but here also) "*gift*," or "*bounty*," as in 1 Cor. xvi. 3 (vers. 1, 4, 6, 7, 19, ix. 14). In lesser degree also by similar specialisation of εὐλογία (= "*blessing*," but here) "*bounty*" (ix. 5, 6), and a like turn given to ἁπλότης (= "*simplicity*," "*sincerity*" [cf. a "*single* eye, Matt. vi. 22], but here) "*liberality*" (ver. 2; ix. 11, 13). The key to this specialised sense impressed upon the first pair of words is evidently this: What God's grace is to man, that is the Corinthians' grace to the poor saints at Jerusalem,—a spontaneous, unearned, free gift, out of a loving heart; man's grace to his fellow-man is his copy of God's grace to himself; and, going deeper, such a heart of grace in man is thus expressing its sense of God's grace in his own case; the human grace has sprung from the blessed effect of God's grace in the heart. Similarly, as to εὐλογία. (See homiletic exposition.)

Ver. 1. **Do you to wit.**—See R.V.; or 1 Cor. xv. 1, or Gal. i. 11, A.V. Cf. the words of the old writs, "*Scire facias A. B.*," *i.e.* "You are to let A. B. know," etc., "*Faire savoir.*" **Grace.**—Obviously in the more usual sense. **Macedonian Churches.**—From whose midst he was writing. Writing the First Epistle from Ephesus, and many months earlier, perhaps before the Macedonians had even heard of the Fund, he speaks of setting the Galatian Churches to work (1 Cor. xvi. 1). We know of Philippi, Berœa, Thessalonica; there may have been others.

Ver. 2.—Take the grammar of the sentence as, *e.g.*, A.V. or R.V. Something may be said for taking thus: "That the abounding of their joy is in the very time of their much trial by their afflictions, and the depth of their poverty has abounded," etc. **Trial.**—See the same word in Rom. v. 4, "experience." The word wavers between, or includes, the *trying* and the *result* of it; the *proving* and the *proof*; the "*experiment*" (ix. 13) and the "*experience*" acquired by the "experiment." Here the *process*, rather than the *result* arrived at. The "trying" was going on. What the "*afflictions*" were is unknown; suggestions may be found in Acts xvii. 5 *sqq.*; 1 Thess. ii. 14, iii. 2, 3, 5 (written some years earlier). **Abundance.**—Notice this word running through the section (vers. 2, 7, ix. 8, 12). **Deep.**—"Reaching deep down" (Stanley); "deep-searching" (*Speaker's Commentary*). N.B.—"Abundance of . . . poverty . . . abound unto riches of liberality" (if verse is so to be construed).

Ver. 3 **Of their own accord.**—Beet suggests: Moved by what Paul told them of the Corinthian zeal (ix. 2), though without his laying any injunction on them to do anything similar.

Ver. 4. **Gift.**—"Grace." The Macedonian gift was their "grace" (as above), and was also their opportunity and their method of taking a practical *share* in the reciprocal fellowship of all believers. No need to distinguish between (1) a fellowship with the Corinthians in giving, and (2) a fellowship manifested by the gift between themselves, though Gentile Christians, with the Jewish Christians at Jerusalem. "Fellowship" all round, in widest sense, is here. No new feeling in them (1 Thess. ii. 14).

Ver. 5. **Not as, etc.**, but, obviously also, "*better than.*" **Hoped** is more than merely "*expected.*" **To us.**—Surely not "as travelling companions" (Stanley); meagre, and only true of the elected deputation. "Not money, but [also] themselves; not to men, but [also] to Christ," and this first. "Their self-surrender to Christ was also a surrender to those whom Christ had set in authority in His Church" (Beet). **By the will of God.**—As 1 Cor. i. 1; 2 Cor. i. 1; a practical recognition of Paul's authority as an apostle.

Ver. 6. **Insomuch that.**—Too subtle to press this to mean a real fulfilment of a Divine design. Not said in First Epistle that Titus had initiated the local Fund at Corinth. [Not named at all in First Epistle.]

Ver. 7.—There is also "*abundance*" at Corinth; but how different. **Love to us.**—In vii. 11 we see this happy effect of the First Epistle. Note the R.V. margin. **Grace.**—Inclining rather to the meaning of "*gift*" here. "Abound in your giving also." **Also.**—*Q.d.* "as well as (not the good works of vii. 11, 12, but) in these good points and qualities" just mentioned.

Ver. 8. **By (way of) commandment.**—They were in a good mood just now, even toward himself, and had been very obedient to his first letter; but it was very uncertain how far they would bear much "telling" from him. "I don't order you to do this, but. . . ." (See under 1 Cor. vii. 6.) **To prove.**—The poor Macedonians have had their "*proof*" (ver. 2); now here I have a little proof for you! **Your love.**—That of ver. 7, primarily, but not only.

Ver. 9.—Cf. the appeal implied in ix. 15; a higher basis of appeal than even that of ix. 8. [1. An Article of Faith; 2. A Matter of Experience; 3. A Principle of Action.—*J. L.*] Observe, "The Grace of . . . *Christ*." Not, as more often, "of *God*." Rom. v. 15 is a remarkable expository illustration; Gal. i. 6 [and ver. 4] should be looked at. [Cf. Col. iii. 13, even with the *variant reading*, where forgiveness is attributed directly to Christ. So also, whilst the Father gave Him, the Son "gave Himself" (Tit. ii. 14; Eph. v. 25; 1 Tim. ii. 6).] **Poor.**—Not merely in His human circumstances, as dependent during His three years' ministry upon charitable gifts, but in the far larger sense of Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8. Therefore also "*became* poor" is better than "*was* poor." [Stanley refers to Milman, *Lat. Christ.*, Book XII., chap. vi., for the wonderful growth, at the beginning of fourteenth century, of the Mendicant Orders, indirectly, from this verse; and, more directly, of the rule and life of Francis of Assisi, earlier.]

Ver. 10. **Advice.**—R.V. is truer, "judgment"; 1 Cor. vii. 25. **This is expedient.**—Viz. (not "that I do not command but rather give my judgment," but) that they "should abound," etc. (ver. 7). Note, their precedence in collecting, and their precedence *in thinking of such a collection*: "ye were the first to" (R.V.). The Galatians were before them only in the particular point of adopting the method of weekly offerings (1 Cor. xvi. 1).

Ver. 11.—As R.V.; also emphasise "*now*" in contrast to "*a year ago*."

Ver. 12.—See special Homily.

Ver. 13.—"God is just in His requirement; so am I." Too narrow to make this only mean: "I do not desire at your expense to relieve the Macedonian Churches from their share of giving." This, so far as true, would only be a particular incidence of his (supposed) principle of action. "I do not want to throw burden—all the burden—on you, to the exemption of others." The Jerusalem Church could hardly, with any appropriateness, be included amongst those *giving* Churches, which were in his mind in making the remark. Yet ver. 14 seems to carry the suggestion that even the then beneficiary Church and the benefactor Churches might in some sense, or under some circumstances, come to change places, and benefactors of to-day become the beneficiaries in their turn. Best comment is Rom. xv. 27.

Ver. 15.—"So far as the Christian life permeates church members and churches will there be reproduced this ancient and beautiful ideal of a company in which each has sufficient, an ideal never realised in material good so completely as in Israel in the wilderness. For all men are but gatherers of food freely given by God." (Beet, very admirably.) More than a mere happy quotation, or apt parallel.

Ver. 16. **Putteth into.**—Same phrase as, and well explains, "*given in*," ver. 1. **More earnest.**—*Q.d.* "*than to need it.*"

Ver. 18.—Quite uncertain who "*the brother*" was. No intentional concealment of his name; the Corinthians knew him, or would very soon, when he arrived in Corinth. Curious old fancy, based on a misunderstanding of "*in the Gospel*," that this was Luke. (So Ignat., *Epp.*, and Jerome.) Three Macedonians are mentioned as travelling from Corinth again (with the collection, probably), Acts xx. 4; Stanley thinks Tychicus perhaps "*the brother*" in ver. 22, and, more confidently, Trophimus here. N.B.—He of ver. 22 is a second, additional to, not the same as this of ver. 19; see "brethren," ver. 23; Titus is mentioned, and *two* others. Probably he of ver. 22 is not a Macedonian, but some usual, business-like, useful travelling companion of Paul.

Ver. 20.—Lit. "taking in sail to avoid the danger that."

Ver. 21. **Honest.**—In the old sense: "What looks, and is, honourable."

Ver. 22. **Confidence.**—Note R.V., rightly, "which *he* hath"; perhaps having been to Corinth with Titus, and gained confidence from what he had seen. This had increased his earnestness in the matter.

Ver. 23.—Good example of the "letters" commendatory (iii. 1). **Messengers.**—Really "apostles"; but not yet in the technical, specialised sense. (Cf. of Barnabas, Acts xiv. 14; but *not* Rom. xvi. 7.) It had been a Jewish, official name for such accredited messengers from Sanhedrin or synagogue, as, *e.g.*, Saul of Tarsus was when sent to Damascus. **Glory of Christ.**—*Q.d.* "They and their errand will bring glory to Him and His religion" (as ver. 19).

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Whole Chapter.*

Four names are the nuclei around which the chapter organises itself:—

A. **Macedonia** (vers. 1-5).
B. **Our Lord Jesus Christ** (vers. 6-11).
C. **Corinth** (vers. 12-15).
D. **Titus** (vers. 16-24).

A. **Macedonia.**—We have, concerning the Macedonian Churches:—

I. **Their circumstances.**—*They were poor, in deep poverty;* their country was at that time notoriously poor. The civil wars of the preceding century [including the battle of Philippi] had laid the country waste, and in Paul's day it had not recovered. Thessalonica was becoming a busy centre, but the country had petitioned Tiberius for some relief from its heavy taxation, and, to lighten its burdens, Macedonia [with Greece; but this was restored by Claudius to the Senate, so that Luke is right; Gallio was *proconsul* (Acts xviii. 12)] had been made an imperial, instead of a senatorial, province. If Lydia were even still at Philippi, she was hardly a sample of Macedonian Christians; she was an immigrant, and her dyeing establishment, with its household servants, may not have been large. And the rest were mostly humble people, in Thessalonica, Berœa, Philippi, as elsewhere. 2. They were being *sorely tried* by *afflictions.* Lost to us as this is in detail, all was then very real, every detail was then fully known to Paul, who was writing in their midst. And fully known to their Lord also, Who was then suffering them to be *put to the proof.* [Cf. Exod. iii. 7, "I have seen, I have seen. . . . I have heard. . . . I know," etc.] Not a stroke fell on them without His sympathetic knowledge, Who was making their circumstances His testing, purifying fire for the gold of their faith and patience (1 Thess. i. 4). With better show of reason than some Churches, they might have said: "It is of no use coming to us to beg, Paul. We have nothing; we are a set of poor people. And this is a bad time"—it always is, to unwilling hearts—"to come raising a fund here; we have enough to think about, holding our own amidst the persecution and the steady, active disfavour of our neighbours to us as Christians." But we have

II. **Their generosity.**—1. Out of the assayer's furnace, heated with sevenfold fires, flowed—*overflowed*—a stream of most precious, most pure, *grace*, in the shape of a most liberal and eagerly spontaneous gift. If there had been any tendency to selfishness or to the scanty giving of fearful hearts and narrow faith, their own poverty had cast it out. They "must" help the *deep poverty* of their brethren at Jerusalem. Much fear, narrow faith? How could these live in hearts full of *abundant joy*? Did they count it *all joy* that they were fallen "into divers trials"? (Jas. i. 2). And "exult in *tribulations* also"? (Rom. v. 3, same Greek word). They were "*cheerful givers.*" Their cup was abundantly full; but their hearts were abundantly full also. They were full to the overflow; running over in simple-hearted, unhesitating benevolence, and that richly. The fountain ran over in a stream; the very stream ran over the banks of expectation, and also of human "prudence" and ability. Very poor, greatly tried, abundantly generous! 2. "*Abundantly.*" Measured by *their power*, what could have been expected? A small gift would have been great for them to give. Hardly anything at all was *to be looked for*, much less *hoped for.* Paul had indeed told them of the collection, and of the eager zeal with which Corinth had taken the matter up; but not by way of command, or injunction, or exhortation, and scarcely even of suggestion. They needed no suggestion; they *were willing of themselves.* Corinthian zeal *provoked very many* (ix. 2) in other Churches; but here, to mention the object of the Fund, and the need of the mother Church, was

sufficient. The torrent of their charity had poured over, from hearts that only needed a touch [no flinty rock that needed smiting, perhaps *twice*], and the grace gushed forth, carrying away before it Paul's prudence and reluctance and care for them. There was no "screwing it out" of unwilling givers. There was no "whipping up" the last few pounds, as at Corinth. No need for it. Good cause shown; then their heart and hand were ready. Paul had tried to stay it, or to keep it within narrower bounds. But no. He must, and should, let them *have a share* in the *ministering to the saints.* If it did not mean this, what was the worth to them of the *fellowship* and the brotherhood? If really "Jew" or "Gentile" counted for nothing in Christ, if really Macedonia as well as Jerusalem were common partakers in the same Christ, then Paul must let them give their *grace*; and he must *receive their gift*, along with the rest. They *begged him* that he would. They would not be said nay. And they gave, and gave *beyond their power.* 3. They gave with the most blessed completeness. There was a "finish" about their benevolence; from first to last it was most admirably thorough; intelligent, orderly, gracious principle ran through it all. They began at the right place, and at the right end. The true gift is the *expression* of the man, as between man and man; as between God and man it is the *embodiment* of the man too. God of old asked for Isaac; but He wanted Abraham; and *Abraham himself* really lay upon the altar by which he stood. A gift loses much, whilst yet it may be worth something to man, if the heart of the giver be not in it; to God it is worth nothing, if the man's self be not in it. All the overflowing readiness of the Macedonians was, after all, no such torrent of resistless, impetuous impulse as that they should forget, before doing anything in actually putting their gifts together, to devote themselves afresh to God. So eager to begin, and to give, and yet they pause [at the beginning of their effort, not like the Corinthians at nearly the end of it] solemnly to consecrate themselves to the Giver of all grace. In modern phraseology, *before a single subscription was announced, the Church held a consecration meeting.* Then all they had, all their poverty too, was avowedly the Lord's; they were His stewards, for little or much; they then proceeded to give "of *His* own" (1 Chron. xxix. 14), not *their* own. [**A model for all Church financial efforts, Memorial Funds, Jubilee Funds, and the like.**] After that, it was comparatively a small touch of excellence that they unreservedly *put themselves under the direction of Paul* in their effort; accepted him as their almoner to Jerusalem; and in the most ungrudging, unquestioning, unqualified way recognised him as Paul the Apostle *by the will of God* (i. 1), falling in with that will, in their very act and its heartiness. It was not his first experience of Macedonian generosity and affection to himself (Phil. iv. 10-19). But he had not *looked for* such a display of *grace* as this, even in them. Of "*grace*," for

III. **All this was grace of God bestowed upon Macedonia.**—Human nature was not in itself of different material and quality in Macedonia to what it was elsewhere. It was grace which had bred grace. Their open hand and open heart were the reflection, the offspring, of God's own. Giving is good for Churches and for men, as checking any tendency to selfishness, and as enlarging the heart and keeping sympathy tender. No change of medical opinion can ever make this kind of "bleeding" anything but good for the soul's health. Good even for the mind, to have something to check self-centering of thought and purpose. Self-interest might conceivably urge to beneficence. But before the initial act, and the impulse to it, can arise in the heart, grace must have begun its work. A bit of beneficence fills the heart with blessing, and in turn this full heart of blessing will flow over in beneficence. And so on, in reciprocal action. But this action and reaction *needs starting.* And this, *grace* must needs do. All good begins there. The *grace of God bestowed upon the Church* at Corinth

(same words as here, 1 Cor. i. 4) assumed a noble form, and enriched them with gifts which called forth Paul's thanksgiving, and made them the paragon Church of the world in such endowments. But *this grace of God . . . upon . . . Macedonia*, was it less noble or less fruitful?

B. **The Lord Jesus Christ and His grace.**

I. One is ashamed of some of the motives urged and methods employed, to raise money for religious and benevolent purposes. The money is contaminated by its source and by the process of extraction. See here **A model appeal.** 1. To Paul "to live is Christ," and naturally, instinctively, by the necessity of his new heart, his thought turns to, rises to, Him. "In Christ" traces the sphere within which Paul "lives and moves and has his" soul's "being." It is no narrow range which is so traced out; abundance of range, abundance of interests, a large, free, happy life; and everything within it is bound by a happy gravitation to Christ the Sun and Centre. Every plan and purpose derives from that Source motive and strength. In this, Paul is an Archimedes who has found his place to stand, and his lever and his fulcrum. With "the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" he can move the world, not to say a reluctant, or negligent, or laggard Church. 2. This appeal is a sample of the way in which the highest themes find place in his letters, in the midst of topics of temporary, and comparatively slighter, interest. [Striking example of this in 1 Cor. vii. 29-31.] "Great texts" occur in the midst of "less useful" material. They occur suddenly; they occur *en passant*; he rises to them, and quits their high level again, without effort; there is no appearance of any feeling of "rising" to them, or of "sinking" from them to a lower plane of thought or feeling. All his life, its plans, its motives, its activities, are "of a piece." He lives at the high level [probably without remembering that it was "high"]. He can pass from the temporary theme to a topic of eternally vital interest, and can resume his temporary theme without any shock at the moment of transition. By such motives as this of ver. 9 he regulated his own life; by such motives did he seek to train his people to regulate theirs. He did not disdain auxiliary motives of a lower order. As we see, he uses Corinth to stir up other Churches to zeal and liberality; he uses Macedonia to spur on Corinth. [So again, descending yet lower, but not unworthily, in ix. 4.]

II. [See Separate Homily on ver. 9. But remark here:] **The model of all beneficence.**—Without much forcing, point by point of parallelism can be found between it and the Macedonian and Corinthian bounty. 1. Was He not "*willing of Himself*"? The Father had not spoken to Him "*by way of commandment*"; He came not to do His own will, indeed, but had "*accepted the exhortation*," and willingly had been sent on His Father's errand. He stood before the throne a servant waiting for commands, with loving, eager, volunteering readiness, proposing Himself for the service: "Then said I, Lo, I come . . . to do Thy will, O God" (Ps. xl. 7, 8); "I delight to do Thy will." 2. One cannot say, indeed, "*beyond His power*," but, very emphatically, "*to* His *power*" *was* He thus *willing*. His whole Divine-human resources and heart of love have been unreservedly drawn upon for us. There is no limit; however much we may have drawn upon Him, we have never even approached, much less touched, any limit to the sufficiency of His grace and power. A limit is inconceivable. In Him is "all the fulness of God" (Eph. iii. 19; with Col. i. 19, ii. 9, 10), in order that we may be filled with it. He gives Himself to our need unstintingly, and *to* the measure of *His power* to bless and save. [May even borrow another word of human giving in this chapter, and say that as there was *readiness to will*, so there was *a performance also out of that which He had* (ver. 11). He did not rest, nor does He find His satisfaction, until He can say, "It is finished."] 3. It belongs to the bottomless depths of truth beneath

what we read in this Book, and then formulate into our doctrine of the Incarnation, to ask whether there were any original *fellowship* between the Son, the "Firstborn of all creation," and our race, which made possible His assumption of the *Redemption fellowship* with our race in its deep need. At all events He has created a *fellowship* which now appeals to Him, as the new *fellowship* in Him did to the Macedonians and Corinthians, and as it should still appeal to Christian judgments and hearts. The need itself is a powerful appeal to all right hearts; and to His heart too. He cannot see need of any kind, and only *see* it. But this was a need of brethren in a real *fellowship* with Himself, and He "*takes upon Him the . . . ministering to the saints.*" 4. May we venture to use Ps. xl. 6, 7 again, and say that He, too, "*first gave Himself to the Lord*, and then"? etc. The psalm is the voice of a human heart; of all true servants of God; but it belongs also to Him, in that whatever of motive or excellence is found in His people is also found in its original, and most perfect, exemplification in Him. 5. May we say that the "*abundance of His joy and of His deep poverty abounded to the riches*," etc. (as ver. 1)? Or that as He "*abounded in everything . . . He abounded in this grace also*"? It would hardly be tracing too minutely the features of the correspondence between all highest Christian service and charity and His, Who is the **Model**.

III. **A model of Christian completeness.**—1. "*Abound in this grace* **also.**" Every point of Christian character needs cultivating. All are not equally adapted for any one form of Christian service; nor is any given Christian equally well adapted for all his own forms of service. But there should be no systematic neglect or omission of any. The aim of Church education and of Christian self-culture should be an all-round, harmonious completeness of service and character. Natural enough to do most what we like best, what costs least of sacrifice or effort, what involves least of unpopularity or singularity. In many Churches, and in very many Christians, there are exaggerated graces, and there are defective, imperfectly developed graces. There are fashions in Christian work. Special forms take the fancy of a generation, and are pushed to the overshadowing of others very needful to be kept up. "*Abound in this grace also.*" Hard to preserve the balance of work and growth; but any point cultivated at the expense of other good ones, is apt to become a blemish. [The beautiful *arm* of the deformed boarder in *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-table.* A noble head, upon a body which has not grown beyond childish stature and strength. And so on.] 2. Specially, the showy gifts and activities must not be allowed to overshadow or lead to the neglect of less obtrusive ones. "*Faith . . . utterance . . . knowledge . . .* (even) *diligence*," will not find their completeness without prompt, perfected *benevolence.* [A suggestion of the same danger may be found in a letter to a Macedonian Church, Thessalonica. 1 Thess. v. 20, "*Despise not prophesyings*"; a very serviceable gift, but then everybody could understand the "prophet," talking clear sense in ordinary, intelligible language, though under the special influence of the Spirit. On the contrary, "*tongues*" was a showy gift, attracting attention to its possessor, who was greatly admired and envied, although it was true that only a man with another gift, "interpretation of tongues," could understand him!] 3. Above all, a Christian character is wanting in completeness, if there be no heart to give and no practice of giving. High professions, great gifts, even abundant activities, cannot cover this deficiency. To omit this is not only to deny the *fellowship*, to lose the reflex blessing of giving to the givers themselves, but it is to leave out of the "Imitation of Christ" a most conspicuous feature. God is a Giver. The Lord Jesus Christ is a Giver. Corinthians must be givers too. "Let Titus finish in you this grace also." "**Also**" is a leading word in the paragraph. Do not forget the "*also*" in life and service.

**C. Corinthians, and the true Christian communism.**

**I. An ideal of social supply.**—Israel was the "kingdom of *God*" on earth; amongst the other states and monarchies this was His. When actual kings were permitted to Israel, they were understood to be only *viceroys*; the real King of Israel was Jehovah. Divine law was State law; in the legislation of God for Israel are embodied in temporary, occasional forms the great principles which secure the wise government and well-being of all community-life. The ideal Israel would be an ideal state. But Israel never was ideal; the ideal of a kingdom under Jehovah never existed outside Deuteronomy. Still, in the wilderness God so ordered the life of His own special subject-people that their wilderness life becomes a perpetual parable. Paul's quotation is no mere felicitous parallel, adduced from an old classic of this people's literature. He is guided to fasten upon and bring forward a case in which the very ideal of provision for the needs of a community was forcibly suggested, and in a small degree was actually carried into effect. There was no want, there was no waste; to-day had sufficiency for its needs, without stint, yet there was *nothing over* for the morrow. Each day brought its due supply, out of God's fulness of resource; the morrow must to-day be trusted for, but each new morning justified the trust; and *ended* it, for the supply believed for was there, waiting to be gathered. Indeed, simplicity, and utterness, of dependence upon God were the very root principles of living. Men went forth morning by morning, not to make anything, but to gather what God had made and had brought to them. They went morning by morning; the act of the host said, "Give us *this day*, again, our bread." The faith which underlay the dependence was kept alive in the very fact that, whether they would or not, they could not accumulate *anything over*. It was the simple life of a great family, where morning by morning the children rise, counting upon finding the renewed, sufficient provision of the father. It is the lovely ideal of Matt. vi. 25-34, the children fed and clothed as the birds and lilies are, and "*taking no*" more "*thought for the morrow*" than they do. [In fact, the Sermon on the Mount is really the great, fundamental, Constitutional Document, the Magna Charta, of a new and more perfect embodiment than Israel had been of the Kingdom of Heaven, God's Ideal State.] The Ideal was again in partial embodiment for a short time after Pentecost attempted in the Christian Church at Jerusalem. Not "attempted" in any sense of organising a modern "movement" or "scheme." The thing was the spontaneous, instinctive growth of the new life of the Spirit. Hearts filled with the Holy Ghost were filled with brotherliness and charity. Rich landowners like Barnabas, and smaller people like Ananias—but with truer heart—"sold lands or houses." None of them called anything he had his own. All was put into the common stock. With the happy result that "*neither was there among them any that lacked.*" In so far, it was Exod. xvi. 18 again realised. [Acts ii. 44, 45, iv. 32, 35.] [N.B.—The general principle that no Christian has any of God's gifts simply for his own use and help and enjoyment, goes very far. It is true of anything he may have learned from Scripture or from Providence; of any richer or new blessing to his own soul which may really have been a fresh disclosure to him of the will of God, or of the possibilities of a holy life. His "experiences" are for the common stock and the help of others. Thus H. W. Beecher: "I always feel as though, if a man has a fine garden, it is mean for him to build around it a close fence, so that nobody but himself and his friend can enjoy it. But, oh, it is a great deal meaner when the Lord has made a garden of Eden in your soul, for you to build around it a great dumb wall, so close and so high that nobody can look through it or over it, and nobody can hear the birds singing in it. And yet there are persons who carry a heart full of sweet gardenesque experiences all the way through life, only letting here and there a

very confidential friend know anything about the wealth that is in them."] But this already is passing over to

II. **The real and its supply.**—1. A world or a Church where none have a surplus and none want, where there are neither "poor" nor "rich," is only a beautiful vision. The ideal kingdom of God will only in the eternal world be the actual; and only there will man's world, the world of the new race that finds its head in the new Adam, coincide with the kingdom. The very beneficence of Pentecostal days was based upon the fact that there was not "*an equality*"; there needed an *equalisation*. And the *typical Christian remedy* is **Almsgiving**, in the broadest sense of the word. Divested of all its unfortunate associations; regarded apart from unfortunate embodiments and expressions of the principle; the essential thing, the **loving voluntary overflow of fulness into need**, is the remedy. It is the copy of the Divine benevolence. It is the Divine order. 2. Political economy easily, and, from its point of view, rightly, makes out the economic unwisdom of almsgiving. Indiscriminately employed, it has promoted an unhealthy and indolent dependence, and even created a new sense of "right" to the dole. The monastery gate and the squire's kitchen have fostered mendicancy. The mechanical almsgiving of a modern Poor Law system hardens giver and receiver. But the instinct of almsgiving is *Christian*, and was from the first a notable outgrowth of the new *fellowship* and *fraternity* in the Church. [See, *e.g.*, Cave's *Primitive Christianity*, Part III., chap. ii.; or, more recent, Pressensé, *Early Years of Christianity*, "Life and Practice," pp. 412-419.] The Eucharistic free-will offertory frequently went to the poor. The early Church historians and biographers are full of eminently "charitable" personages, official and private members alike. Poor were charitable, like the rich, each according to their means. "The community of spiritual things leads naturally to a community also of the inferior necessaries of life. There is no compulsion, but the simple application of the law of solidarity, that all those who live by the same life of the Word should have all things in common." (Clement, summarised by Pressensé.) Wealth, in the broadest sense, and of every kind,—whatever one has and another needs,—is held as a trust from God, the Giver, for, not the possessor only, but for the sake of those who need. And the obligation to this larger "Almsgiving" lies equally upon those who to-day are the receivers. To-morrow they may be able, in some other way, to be the givers; to-day's givers may need to be the receivers. Spiritual benefits may repay the temporal. Indeed, true charity brings its own repayment in the enlarged sympathy, the tenderer heart, the check to selfishness. The principle of our paragraph tends to a self-acting redress of all need. As in the ocean, so here, any inequalities of level tend always to adjustment and equalised fulness in every direction.

III. **Unwise methods and motives** are suggested by vers. 8, 10, 13. *E.g.* "*not by way of commandment.*"—Compulsory legislation; violent reorganisation of the existing social system, with all its crude or selfish and unequally pressing methods of division of comfort or "wealth"; *enforced* Socialism or Communism, as a necessary preventive of undue poverty or undue riches, or as promising perfect contentment and happiness, and fairer sharing of labour and its rewards; must all fail, for the same reason that the Christian plan of the benevolence of God's stewards towards God's needy ones, fails in securing an ideal society. The fallen heart in man must be taken into account. If Capital be selfish, Labour may be selfish too. The social struggle is too often poor selfishness organising itself against rich selfishness. [Indeed, the oldest political economies formulated "laws" which proceeded on the supposition that self-interest, enlightened or not, was the one motive which could be relied upon as certain, always and in all men, to operate.] There must be no "*commandment*" on the one side; there must be "the *willing mind*" on the other. Else the issue may be, as

the aim of some violent proposals seems of necessity to be, that a new inequality may be produced, in which the "haves" and the "have-nots" of the old order simply exchange positions. Christianity says all round, "*I mean not that other men be eased and you burdened.*" To enrich a "Jerusalem" by the impoverishment of a "Corinth"; to make a "Corinth" bear all the burden of helping a "Jerusalem," whilst some "Macedonia" or "Galatia" or "Ephesus" goes free,—this is as imperfect a social order and supply as that which it is attempted to redress. In this also, "The foolishness of God"—the *Christian* "almsgiving" principle, condemned by the political economies, repudiated by the communising reorganisers of the existing order of society—"is wiser than men." If this could only pervade a society of men, themselves first renewed by the grace of God, then a continuously self-renewing *equalisation* would be secured by Christian benevolence better than by the mechanical *equality* of systems or law. [The poorest give their rich benefactors very much, directly and indirectly.]

D. **Titus and his fellow-deputies.**—[For Titus, see Gal. ii. 3, uncircumcised, a Gentile; converted by Paul, Tit. i. 4; associated in work with Paul, Acts xv. 2, Gal. iii. 1, 2 Cor. ii. 13, viii. 23, xii. 18; sent to Crete, Tit. i. 5; called to Nicopolis, Tit. iii. 12; sent from Rome to Dalmatia, 2 Tim. iv. 10; *not named in the Acts.*] 1. Note the remarkable fact that Titus is only known to us by the incidental references of four letters of Paul, one of them addressed to himself. Unmentioned in the direct narrative of the Acts, and even in the first letter to Corinth, though he was, probably, one of the bearers of it [1 Cor. xvi. 11; 2 Cor. xii. 18; neither Timothy (1 Cor. xvi. 10), nor Apollos (*ib.* 12) was], and not now for the first time associated with the Corinthian collection (ver. 6). Paul's "*fellow-helper concerning*" the Corinthians. It may also not be too precarious a conjecture that he was a "stronger man" in every way, except goodness, than Timothy, who is mentioned repeatedly in the Acts. No such emphatic and recurrent words about courage are addressed to him, as 1 Tim. i. 18, iii. 15, iv. 14, v. 21, vi. 12 (cf. also 1 Cor. xvi. 10, 11). Indeed, he had needed courage, as much as tact, in dealing with the Corinthians and their bearing towards Paul, and, more recently, with the business of their lagging collection. He was beyond suspicion, even by the Corinthians (xii. 18), of any malversation in dealing with their money, or of anything but most perfectly disinterested and aboveboard conduct in any particular. He was plainly not only full of affection for Paul, but a warm-hearted, zealous man, troubled about wrong, rejoicing over good, "*comforted*" when he saw it (vii. 7, 13, 15, etc.). One may infer his good sense from the fact that he was Paul's trusted agent in the delicate task of "handling" these Corinthians and their affairs; as, later on, when he was despatched to regulate the ill-organised Churches of Crete, the native material of which was drawn from a coarse type of nationality ["liars, evil beasts, slow bellies," i. 12]. [Methodist readers may compare such men as Alexander Mather, —Wesley's "right-hand man,"—Samuel Bradburn, Adam Clarke, Henry Moore, William Thompson, Joseph Benson, Joseph Bradford, a cluster of companions and fellow-helpers around the venerable Wesley in his later years, often sent on such errands as this of Titus.] Significant and suggestive that such a man—with strength of character, real piety, tact, courage, and altogether above the most sensitive suspicion; with lively sympathy for the work of God; the very ideal of a man who must bear responsibility and carry out the extension of the work of God (what pastor does not say, *O si sic omnes*?)—should be unmentioned in the Acts, and even in the first Corinthian Epistle. It is significant of the character of the Scripture record. It is historical; its record gives many a point of verification of the truth of the history in which the Revelation is rooted. One touch of historical veracity is found in the very informality of the record and the inequality of treatment. It is so far presumptively a genuine contemporary

narrative, in that it moves with the *insouciance* of the consciousness of truth and of transparent simplicity of purpose, in and out amongst historical personages, scenes, events, dates; touching *en passant*; including quite incidentally; dealing fully, or by allusion only; or omitting altogether; just as may happen, whilst it pursues its course and its simple purpose. A simple, inartificial narrative, such as can omit any mention of an important worker like Titus without any suspicion of design attaching to the fact, carries with it a *primâ facie* credential of its truth. 2. The omission of Titus from the Acts is suggestive of much more of holy, valuable labour, which has found not even a chance mention in an Epistle, and of much, very much, the greater part of the work of the Church, which finds no earthly record at all; it is suggestive of workers whose only memorial is in the "book of life" (Phil. iv. 3). In the modern, true *Acta Sanctorum*, the (holy "catholic") continuation of the *Acta Apostolorum*, how many Titus-like men find no mention. But their work is no more lost than his; they are no more forgotten than he. 3. This group of Christian men is completed by two other character portraits, anonymous, known only conjecturally by us, and yet so vividly hit off in a stroke or two that we feel as if we were very well acquainted with them. Here is one who has every one's good word *throughout all the Churches* for his work *in the Gospel*. He is a successful evangelist, we may presume; and his gifts are not more the praise of every one than is his character. He, like Titus, is a trusted man. The "*Churches*"—not one only, but several—have accepted him as their trustee to hold, and in due course to administer, the accumulated relief fund. [There is no greater honour which can be paid to character than to give a man one's trust. It "*honours* him that gives and him that takes." The more complete the trust; above all, if it has to be unusually "blindfold" trust, or if there be risk involved; the greater the honour. (Trust speaks almost as well for him who gives it. The man who seems to count it a virtue and a boast that "*He* never trusts anybody any further than he can see them"; who poses as a universal sceptic as to the existence of any thorough and absolute honour and honesty in any man; is not himself the noblest type of man. His boasted shrewdness, which never allows him to commit himself to any other man, reveals a narrow, mean soul, which has not even in itself a witness to anything nobler in human nature. He honours his own heart, who can and does trust, without foolish credulity, and without dishonouring self-scepticism.) (Nothing pays greater honour to God's word and character than our faith; hence, perhaps, so much is made to turn upon Faith.) Trophimus, or any other, —this man is rich and honoured in the trust of the Churches. Is the other unnamed portrait that of Tychicus? It may be; later on (Acts, *ubi supra*) we find him and Trophimus travelling together in Paul's company. (Paul and his band of companions moving from place to place recall the Master and His company of twelve moving up and down the land of Israel years before; personal attendants, messengers on occasion, learners, workers, friends.) As the other is the choice of the Churches, so is this one the choice of Paul. Trusty, with ability in practical affairs not now for the first time proved by Paul; the very man for the work just now in hand. 4. Men, all these, made *for* the work; and many such made *by* the work. In every Church are examples of men whose abilities lay dormant, hardly known—even to themselves—until the call and claim of the work of Christ revealed them—a discovery to themselves. How much of such many-sided fitness lies obvious enough, but unemployed and not available; because the possessors will not hear the call, and respond to the claim. *And the fitness is a presumptive call.* In the very correspondence between the work and the instrument, lie a cogent argument and appeal, which a fit man should require a very good reason indeed for declining to yield to. 5. Such men, with their proved ability, and, still more, with their trusted character, are no small

gift to the Churches. "*Thanks be to God*" for them and for their readiness—like that of Titus—to present *themselves* living sacrifices to the Lord and His work. It is no small service that such men, in office and carrying responsibility, turn the edge of criticism and silence all possible suggestions affecting the honour of the Church and the fidelity of its administration, especially in the financial "*abundance which is administered.*" Their ability is a guarantee of the wisdom, their character of the honesty, of the management. The responsible leaders in the Churches not only must stand clear before the most searching light of the scrutiny of their *Lord*, Christ; they must also, so far as may be, "*provide*" that all commends itself as "*honest*," honourable, to all reasonable human observation and examination. *The Church should be a corporation with a more than ordinarily sensitive conscience.* The honour of their Lord is involved. Such men, so administering the Church's affairs "*to the glory of the same Lord*," are not only a strength and a wealth to the Church, but they "*are the glory of Christ.*" [1. The Churches should have properly audited accounts. 2. There needs be no undue sensitiveness about mere gossip or ill-natured talk (such as against Wesley or General Booth *re* finance). Do right, and let the rest go (2 Chron. xxv. 9). "Hew a true line, and let the chips fall as they may" (saying of Feilden, the Lancashire merchant-prince). There will be plenty of criticism, do what the Church may.]

## *SEPARATE HOMILIES.*

Ver. 9. *Christ; Poor, yet making Many Rich.*

I. 1. Apart from the circumstances which are its setting, this text is a gem of truth. The very stratum in which it is found has its value; it can be worked to a real spiritual profit. But the gem is priceless. 2. It is instructive as revealing (see Homiletic Analysis, B.) the habitual region of Paul's thought. He enters and quits such a high theme, as one well accustomed to the heights; his manner of introducing and employing this great truth is incidental disclosure of the close relation in which such "doctrinal" grandeurs stood in his own life to practical conduct. 3. Doctrine may be presented with a forbidding rigidity; it ought to underlie, and be clothed by, the beauty of Christlike living. It is the firm basis of all Christian hope and the experimental life. [Beneath the most beautiful face is a hard, grinning skull. The most beautiful body is built up upon a skeleton, rigid, hard, strong; which may be exhibited—as doctrine sometimes has been—in its bareness and rigidity, stern, certainly not beautiful, even forbidding. Yet the face needs the skull; the body needs the skeleton. Teaching and experimental life which have beneath them no firm, strong skeleton of doctrine are apt to be feeble, fatally pliable, shapeless, unserviceable.] 4. Seems sometimes "cruel" to such a text, to dissect it for its underlying skeleton. The botanist sacrifices the flower, as he pulls it to pieces to examine and exhibit its structure. Yet the first topic in this text is—

II. **The theology.**—1. Difficult to use any formulated language on this topic, as on many others, which is not open to legitimate criticism, or which would not, with very slight variation, swerve right or left into mischievous error. Difficult to use any which is not rather a protest against the assertion, or acceptance, of some point, or against some development or "consequences," which are already, and in advance, negatived by some Scripture statement. Difficult to allow for the effect upon Scripture statements of the fact that everything relating to the manner of the Divine existence is exhibited in connection with the activity of the Trinity in the work of human Redemption. 2. "*He was rich, . . . He became poor*" is the

practical, workaday shape of the *Kenosis* of Phil. ii. 7. [The "poor" are to have "the Gospel preached to them"; they must have even its theology in a form apprehensible by the youngest and the simplest.] "*The form of God*" was not eagerly clutched and retained. He forewent it, and presented Himself to human observation in the "*form of*" man the "*servant*" of God, assuming to Himself, possessing, exhibiting, the characteristics of manhood, and in His intercourse with men *normally* conforming Himself to, confining Himself within, the conditions of man's life; in many particulars of His work and mission submitting to be "*a prophet raised up in the midst*" of Israel, acting as the old prophets did, as the servants of Jehovah (Acts iii. 22), [though He stands forth as the highest and most glorious example of the Prophetic Order, receiving the Spirit "*without measure*" (John iii. 34),] only drawing upon the reserve possibilities of His proper "*form of God*," and only speaking without a veil over His face of glory, just so far as might be needful for the accomplishment of His redeeming errand. And He further stooped to a yet lower level. Manhood was low, far beneath Godhead; man's death was lower; the death of a crucified man, cruel, shameful, the death of a criminal or a slave,—man could even in death hardly go lower than that lowest; yet "*even to*" that point—death, death upon a cross—did He carry His "obedience," the "*Lord of all*" Who had consented, had chosen, to become His Father's "*servant*" for man's sake. Paul thus expounds, in the passage where he most fully approaches the Incarnation topic, his words here. 3. There are depths beyond the sounding of the wisest beneath these *quasi-popular* expositions of the inscrutable Divine Fact. Subtle theories of wide-spreading consequence have been spun, in spider fashion, out of the bowels of the simple phrase, "*Emptied* Himself," or that other, "The Word *was made* [became] flesh." "One element is common to them all; . . . a literal merging of the Divinity of the Son into the finite spirit of the Man Christ Jesus. The general idea takes many forms: sometimes simply Pantheistic, the Eternal Spirit thinking itself as a Person in Christ; sometimes purely Eutychian, God the Son contracted into humanity, and both growing together to perfection; sometimes Apollinarian, the Potency of the Son working dynamically in the psychical soul and flesh of Jesus." (Pope, *Theology*, ii. 194.) Attempts all these to be precise where precision is impossible; where the Fact passes our apprehension altogether. 4. His own words make one thing clear: the "I" Whom men heard and saw in His "*poverty*," carries His life backward [as our text does] into eternal depths of the past, and forward into eternal distances of the Future, with an unbroken continuity of existence and of personal self-consciousness. "*I came forth. . . . I am come. . . . Again . . . I go*" (John xvi. 28). In every sense is "*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever*" (Heb. xiii. 8). Theological statement must in its rotundity of systematised completeness find room for all such Scripture statements as make a Godhead, "emptied," even temporarily, of those characteristics which are part of the very definition of God, untrue and inconceivable. He was never so "*poor*" as to cease to be Himself. [Heb. i. 1-4 is a Divine "Life of the Son of God," going back to the date when "He" made the world, and yet earlier, to those undated, dateless ages when He was (essentially and all along) Brightness and Image; continuing through the years—the midway episode—of His redeeming work; and forward to, and past, His (resumed) session on "the throne of the Majesty on high." Noteworthy is this: "Being the Brightness, . . . upholding, . . . when He had purged, . . . He sat down." The continuous, native, inherent con-

dition is *contemporaneous* with the acts wrought on the stage of human history at a definite, earthly date. As though the Royal Son, and Co-regent, and Prime Minister, of a Sovereign, without ceasing to be anything belonging to his nature and birth, or to his relation to his father, and without ceasing to *uphold all* the empire by his adminstration, should add to his labours the special task of going to a remote and rebellious and ruined province, and himself winning, or reducing, its people to submission.] Human illustration is of course imperfect. Peter the Great of Russia is in personal character not even for a moment's passing comparison, to be put beside the "Lord of glory." Yet he may help to such apprehension as may be possible, of One Who, for the sake of His people's well-being, "*became poor*," though all the while He never ceased to be "*rich*" in His own proper right and in fact. Peter narrowed his life, in all respects needful for his purpose—in dress, in residence, [in a shipwright's cottage in Holland,] in style of living, in manual labour as a shipyard operative—within the conditions of the life of a working-man. Yet, if need were, for the safeguarding of his true Imperial honour and the welfare of his people, he could and did, assert in word and act, and draw upon, his state and power and position as Czar of the Russias. Becoming a shipwright; taking upon him the form of a servant; without ceasing to be the ruler of his empire and the possessor of all its resources.

III. **The experience.**—1. The word "*ye know*" must not be unfairly pressed, to contain more necessarily than "Ye are aware of"; "ye remember that ye have been told of," etc. Not necessarily more in it than an intellectual apprehension and recalling of the fact. But to serve Paul's purpose the *knowing* must not stop there. The truth must by the understanding be brought to bear upon the heart, and, in the next step, upon the will, arousing the flagging activity of the Corinthian Church. No truth in the whole round of Christian doctrine is ever effective, if it be merely admitted into the region of the understanding. That is the mere outer Court of the Gentiles in the temple of our being. If it is to affect practice, to assist the life of fellowship with God, to promote the perpetual offering of self and life upon the altar, it must go into the inner court, the court of God's Israel of to-day, the new Israel of the Spirit. It must enter the heart. The *heart* must "*know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" No Divine truth is known merely by the understanding. [*Pectus facit theologum.*] "*Flesh and blood had not revealed*" to Peter even the momentary and imperfect glimpse he had gained of the true dignity of his Master (Matt. xvi. 17). It was, directly, from "My Father which is in heaven." A man may carefully collect and collate the statements of Scripture as to the Deity of Jesus of Nazareth; he may weigh the statements which seem, or are made, difficulties or objections to the truth; he may determine calmly, coolly, that for these there is sufficient explanation; and, in the end, he may regard, and accept, the Godhead of Jesus as the teaching of Scripture, arrived at by fair induction. But he does not *know* the truth. "*No man can call Jesus Lord but by the Spirit*" (1 Cor. xii. 3). In like manner, no real knowledge of the meaning of this grace of Christ, which wrought His *poverty*, is ever gained by reading, by induction from Scripture facts and testimonies, by mere intellectual apprehension of any kind. Knowledge comes by "*the demonstration of the Spirit*" (1 Cor. ii. 4). He takes of "*the things of Christ*" and "*shows them*" to men (John xvi. 14). Christ summarised in a sentence the teaching of many "*prophets*," "*They shall be all taught of God*" (John vi. 45). The only man to whom "*doctrine*" is "*truth*" is the man thus "*convinced*" by the Spirit. To him only is it an operative reality, and not a speculative opinion merely.

The man who in himself is being "*made rich*" through the poverty of the humbled Christ, comes to the truth with a new, peculiar illumination upon it, with a new and peculiar verification of it. The road by which, perhaps intellectually, he arrived at the doctrine is by him re-travelled with the new light of heart knowledge, and is only properly known in that light; the truth he arrived at was a goal reached in the dark or the dim dawning, only seen clearly when the "Sun of Righteousness" Himself had "*shined into his heart*" (iv. 6). All this may not lie in the surface, argumentative use of the word by Paul; but it underlies the word, and is implicitly there. His argument will have no real force, where the knowledge is not that which has been gained by experience; it is *knowledge* which has been *lived into*.

IV. **The purpose of the poverty.**—1. The *enrichment* of His people. Such "*enrichment*" as in 1 Cor. i. 5 (and ver. 7 here) is one aspect, one phase, of the many-sided blessing. But all the life of grace, from its first inception in a germinal life, through the growing maturity of the "*perfect*," "*spiritual*" man, until the utmost earthly wealth of knowledge and of blessing enlarges into a new beginning of "enrichment" in the world of eternity; all its accompaniments of knowledge, communion, victory, light, peace, joy,—all is included. All that "grace" brings; all that "glory" means; all that is contained in the marvel of love "*that we should be called sons of God*"; all that is given and is pledged in that God calls Himself *ours* (see the argument in Matt. xxiii. 32); all the eternally unfolding possibilities of a redeemed, restored Manhood, restored after the pattern of Him Who is the "*firstborn amongst many* [similar "sons" and so] *brethren*" (Rom. viii. 21); —all is included. Whether any other way of restoration and enrichment were possible we may hardly, and we need not, inquire. It should be ours to see that we explore, and allow ourselves to be led into, all the meaning of our heritage of wealth through His poverty. [If we have given a present, which has cost (for us) not a little, and which has only been possible for us to give at the price of some self-denial; into whose choosing, and perhaps whose making, we have put the most valuable thing we had to give,—our loving thought and labour,—how are we disappointed if the receiver thanks us perfunctorily, or in a conventional heartiness of phraseology which evidently covers an absence of appreciation of our gift, or of ourselves; if we find it put away into some drawer or casket, and only now and again for decency's sake, or to save our feeling, worn or used, whereas we hoped it might be in constant use, a daily joy or service. Then what of His "disappointment" (to use a human word, and to think humanly also) when the "*riches*," which He made available for us, at such cost of pains and sacrifice and loving design, lie plainly little appreciated, seldom appropriated, and never appropriated in any full measure, even by those who thank Him in a heart-betraying, cold, formality of eucharistic phraseology. Let us gladden Him and recompense His love by putting to the utmost experimental proof the meaning and contents of the "*riches*" which are His dear-bought "grace."] [N.B.—He *does* mean that Himself "*be burdened and others eased.*"]

Ver. 12. *A Collection Sermon.*—In reading the text the case of the Widow and her Mite immediately recurs to mind, as illustrating and embodying Paul's statement. (See Homiletic Analysis.) Like so many other sayings, of temporary occasion, this embodies a great principle of abiding and many-sided applicability in our dealings with God.

I. 1. **The real offering to God is the "readiness," the "willing mind."**—The word "*it*" is supplied in translating. It must not be insisted on with too definite a reference in exposition. The sense is general: "If there be . . . on man's side, there is

an acceptance on God's side, according to," etc. Yet whole drift of the passage shows that the thing which gives any value to the gift is *the willing mind.* It *is the gift*; all else is expression, accessory, robing, drapery. Unless "*the willing mind*" go before and lie evident before God's eye, the rest counts for nothing. It must infuse gift and service with its own quality. If this spirit of the deed be absent, all else is a dead thing to offer to the living God. The silver and the gold are His; He neither needs nor cares for our money, nor is benefited by it. He Who has all power in heaven and earth, and all for the needs of His Church, does not depend, by any necessity, upon our puny labour or our gifts. Of old He did not for Himself want the carcases whose death made His Temple courts one great shambles. The life was the true offering. The willing mind is the life of the gift or service, the one true offering. 2. If we could see God's copy of the subscription and collection lists of the Churches, we should find that His revision and appreciation had made marked discrepancies between His copy and ours. Ciphers struck off from some swelling printed amounts; thousands dwindled to the hundreds or the tens. Many of the shillings and the pence, on the other hand, standing entered at values which would surprise nobody more than the, perhaps humble, givers. The cup of cold water, forgotten by even the giver, remembered gratefully by Him Whose reminder and recognition call out the unfeigned amazement which cries, "Lord, when saw we Thee thirsty?" It is possible that the life's work of some prominent Diotrephes will shrivel up into very modest bulk and receive the Master's barest thanks. Yet, to be fair, remember: Let there be the willing mind *and* the liberal gift; let there be the thoroughly right heart and motive *and* the abundant labour; such a man's deed is doubly, gloriously acceptable. Let us have a care how we give, and why; how we serve, and in what spirit; lest in the reckoning we be amongst those whose gift or work is used, who are themselves blessed (for God is no man's debtor), but who do not find the best blessing of final, full, personal acceptance. Indeed, unwilling and unwitting instruments get used. Some are the mere conduit-pipe, the mere vessel, conveying blessing in which they have no share. 3. *For our sakes* —independent as He is of our labour or gifts—God seeks our co-operation. That there is any acceptance and reward at all, is altogether a matter of grace; but seeing that there is reward, He graciously allows us in this way to determine how large the reward shall be, how abundant the acceptance. Also: Every time we put the willing mind into practical embodiment, we cultivate the willingness. The impulse to do or to give, which takes no practical shape is not merely aroused in vain, but is weakened by the vain stimulation. Parents could as well, or better, do the little tasks which they give their children; they need sometimes after all to be done over again. But for their sakes they "ask" their help. So the gift of the willing mind is a blessing (ix. 5, 6) to him that gives as really as to him that takes. Every least service done with the willing, devoted heart, strengthens the devotion, and helps to render permanent and instructive the willing mind. [4. Then, as in the analytical exposition, the characteristics of true and acceptable service may be enlarged upon: "*Willing of themselves;*" "*with much entreaty begged,*" as a privilege, to be allowed to give; "*beyond their power,*" though this is not *required* by Paul or by God; they "*gave themselves first to the Lord*"; and the secret and spring of all was, they "*remembered the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"] [If the occasion be (say) a Hospital Sunday, it may be further said:] 5. There may be (to-day) gifts of ostentation, of rivalry between Church and Church, for a good place in the published lists; gifts also springing from a mere sentimental admiration

of the idea of a united day of charity. There is, manifestly, work done in the Church from training and habit; the workers were early set in their groove, and have had no strong temptation to leave it. There is work which happens to be the fashion. "Everybody in our set does it; we must." To some, work is a stern duty, often a drudgery, but done because they *ought*. Better than many a motive, that; better far than merely the desire or the necessity to keep right with a master, or with some one whose favour is to be desired. Basest of all is the idea of, so to speak, earning so many "good marks" in heaven's register. The gain is, materially, often the same to the Church, the hospital, the sick, the poor, the sanctuary, or the fund; but to the man himself such gain is counted as nothing, or as loss. There is not the "willing mind."

II. **The willing mind is not all.**—1. The Corinthian danger was of a failure between will and deed, between intention and performance, or, more exactly, between the beginning and the completion of their task. *Partly will* and *partly deed* can only be accepted when no more is possible; *the will for the deed* when no deed is possible. The snare besets all workers: work falls through after a hearty inception, for want of a patient endurance in carrying out. Easy to begin, under the force of a stirring appeal, or the deep stirring of emotion by the sight of a sad need; even to begin energetically. But to go on week by week (1 Cor. xvi. 2), when the first enthusiasm has become a memory, is to some temperaments especially difficult. The enthusiasm must not be allowed to become a memory; the sense of debt to "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" must be perpetually renewed at the Cross. Paul's words gently hint that, to even the most willing, and the (apparently) most active or liberal, the Lord's question will be, not, "How much did you do, or give?" but, "Did you do all you could?" Five talents should bring *five*. 2. Happily the principle may be reversed in its application. We serve a Master Who is thoroughly acquainted with us, and thoroughly reasonable (to speak as of man) in what He requires. The trumpet-shaped funnels of the Temple money chests rang with the big gifts of the rich; the poor widow's two mites made no noise as she slipped them in; but she gave a hundred per cent., as no other had done. *Ability could go no further*. 3. Many gifts as valuable as money, and more necessary: hearty, loving, personal effort for souls; a week's prayer contributed to the success of the Sunday's teaching; the invitation of the neighbour to the house of God. There are willing, busy hearts which can give little money, little weight of influence, no very wise judgments, no preaching or teaching ability. Yet no humblest is to despond or be idle. "If there be, . . . it is accepted, *according to that a man hath*." God knows, and the wise or wealthy workers and supporters should not forget, how largely the success which crowns the wisely planned, liberally supported, efficiently worked schemes, is the result of the banded prayers of a company of humble, godly people, who can contribute nothing else. A sick saint, bedridden, suffering, year after year, who can *only* lie and pray, but prays *mightily*, for the work and the workers, or who grandly exemplifies to every visitor, or domestic servant, the gain of godliness and the all-sufficient grace of the Saviour, is often making an offering very large in its acceptableness. A plain man, who cannot argue, but can live and testify at his work; who never misses one of the rare chances of speaking for His Master; it is a gift up to the full level of "that the man hath." [Legend appended to this Homily.] 4. Let this principle obtain with us, in our judgment of others. Like God, as far as may be let us estimate "what a man hath." Tempted to think hardly of a man who does not give as much as we thought he ought. But what claims has he upon him? Perhaps some of which only His Master

knows. Perplexed at the blemishes, the incongruities, found in the lives of some very earnest, very demonstrative, very loud-professing Christian men and women. We can hardly conceive how they cannot condemn these things which lie so obvious to our censure, and to that of the world. Are they honest? Or hypocrites? It may well be that they are honest enough, though it is a great pity they are not more spiritually sensitive and enlightened in judgment. But what is the material out of which they have been made Christians? The class out of which they have been drawn? What their opportunities, their surroundings, their training? The habit and cast of their mind? Their own Master, looking into their heart sees, as between Him and them, the pure white light of a perfect intention; but it shines out to our observation through a poor, dimmed, coloured, distorted medium of human and personal limitation. Conversely, too, the clear white light of Divine truth on these points shines in upon their judgment and conscience through the same poor medium also. "According to that a man hath," in His Lord's judgment of him.

[**Legend in outline.**—King sitting daily at palace window watching *his* cathedral rise. Falls asleep; dreams; sees building finished; high up on tower the tablet which is to record *his* name and gift; another name there! A woman's name; long inquiry of all about him quite fruitless; woman unknown. Proclamation made through the city brings a poor widow to him at last. "Your name?" "Yes." "Why there?" "Do not know." "What have you done?" "Nothing but carry water to the masons, to refresh them on hot, thirsty days."]

## CHAPTER IX.

### *CRITICAL NOTES.*

Ver. 1—Connected, in word [περί, in both cases] and in fact, with 1 Cor. xv. 1, which belongs to the initiation of this "collection," this "ministration" for the poor "saints" of the Church at Jerusalem, as this does to the conclusion of the financial effort. **Superfluous.**—Yet he had been dealing with it, in chap. viii., and here urges motives to liberality (ver. 6 *sqq.*). Was there no need to speak of it? Was this Christian simplicity of truth? Yes (see Homiletic Analysis). Connect viii. 24, ix. 1, 6. "Show ye them. . . . I have no *need* to speak to you. . . . *Yet* I will remind you that," etc. Cf. 1 Thess. iv. 9, v. 1.

Ver. 2. **Forwardness of mind.**—This clears the "readiness" of R.V. from doubt. Not their preparedness of arrangement to make up and send their contribution (viii. 19). **Provoked.**—As the occasion of the journey of Epaphroditus to Rome once stirred up these same Macedonians, *always liberal-hearted*, and proving it by repeated gifts to himself, and called forth their generosity to him in his prison in Rome, so that the winter-dormant stem of their liberality was touched as with the breath of spring, and "flourished again," *i.e.* broke out into blossom and practical fruit (Phil. iv. 10 *sqq.*, A.V.). **Your behalf** (R.V.).—Of course not implying any desire or request of theirs that he would.

Ver. 3. **The brethren.**—Viz. mentioned in viii. 16 *sqq.* **In this behalf.**—In this particular detail, on this point, viz. your having all in readiness.

Ver. 5. **Covetousness.**—Which would hold back even the devoted, promised, collected money to the last moment; not releasing, or paying over, one moment earlier than was necessary.

Ver. 6. **Bountifully.**—See R.V. margin, and notice how this verse takes up the word for "*bounty*" in ver. 5. Really, literally, "*blessing*" (ver. 5) "*with blessings*" (ver. 8). Thence, makes "*blessing*," full of associations of God's gifts in measure and manner of bestowment, lead on to the style and spirit of giving in ver. 7.

Ver. 7. **Grudgingly.**—*Out of* (a heart filled with) *sorrow* at having to part with the gift. Prov. xxii. 8 is quoted from LXX., not the Hebrew.

Ver. 8. **All.**—Good instance of Paul's (instinctive, not formal) rhetoric. Always tends to amplificative, cumulative phraseology. Piles up prepositions only slightly differentiated, or phrases nearly synonymous (*e.g.* Rom. x. 12), or vaguely large (as here, "all"). "*All* might" (Col. i. 11), "*all* prayer" (Eph. vi. 18), "*all* knowledge" (1 Cor. xiii. 2), "*all* acceptation" (1 Tim. i. 15), etc.; *q.d.* "Whatever the meaning in which you need to conceive of it, whatever the form in which it needs to shape itself in manifestation—I mean all that!" **Grace.**—Here in a special, narrowed sense; nearly equivalent to "the means wherewith you may be able to give." Connection: "Do not hesitate to give; do what is right; God will see to it that your own need is supplied." Cf. the same principle illustrated in Mal. iii. 10, and—less closely parallel—in Phil. iv. 19: "You have supplied all *my* need; my God will supply all *your* need." [Compare also the four-faced cherubim of the Chariot, Ezek. i. 15-17; and the really connected "foursquare" of the Heavenly City, xxi. 16. Everything of God is foursquare in its completeness; His City approachable, and giving entrance on all sides, from all quarters, to redeemed man. Similarly, "*all* grace" in its widest meaning stands in the midst of man's needs, foursquare, exactly meeting our need and our request, from whatever side we approach it.]

Ver. 9.—Ps. cxii. 9, quoted from LXX. (cxi.). **Abideth.**—*Q.d.* "is never to be exhausted" (Stanley). Too narrow.

Ver. 10. **Supplieth.**—The usage lying at the root of this word in Greek may furnish the preacher with vivid illustration of (say) Phil. i. 19. A wealthy Greek citizen had *to assume*, as a public duty, *the whole expense* of the training and maintenance of the Chorus for a new play. "God will provide all the needed expense." **Seed . . . food.**—Clear reminiscence of Isa. lv. 10. (See homiletic development.) **Righteousness.**—In the narrow sense of the Psalm quoted, primarily.

Ver. 11.—Difficult to choose between "*bountifulness*" and "*simplicity*," as in Rom. xii. 8; 2 Cor. viii. 2, and ver. 13. The direct, and simply open, mind runs close with the simply opened hand; no after-thought, or reserve, or regret in either. **Everything . . . all.**—A cumulative phrase again.

Ver. 12. **Administration.**—Same word, in slightly varied aspect, as "*ministering*" in ver. 1. **Service.**—The word (classically) used of a public burden assumed and discharged as in ver. 10. But must not be pressed here. **Aboundeth.**—Note how this word recurs, ver. 1 (Greek), ver. 8.

Ver. 13.—Sense made clear in R.V. "Professed" means "openly avowed and confessed"; not, of course, "*pretended* subjection." **Distribution.**—"*Your contribution*," R.V. Literally, your "fellowship," or "communion." Word is *polar*; at the *action* end it is "communicating," at the *feeling* end it is "community" of heart. Includes both, for the Corinthian contribution was an emphatic expression of the new community between Jew and Gentile.

Ver. 15.—At first sight unsuggested, irrelevant. So much so, that *Speaker's Commentary, in loc.*, pronounces the application to Christ "too wide a deviation from the immediate context" to be admissible. (But see Homily under 1 Cor. xvi. 22.)

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Whole Chapter.*

We have:—

A. **Christian courtesy exemplified** (vers. 1-5).

B. **Christian giving described** (vers. 6-14).

C. **God's giving and gift the model and motive** (ver. 15).

A. I. **Consistent with thorough, transparent simplicity of truth.**—1. The Christian is to be courteous (1 Pet. iii. 8, *not* to be quoted). Yet is to "speak the truth" (and "*do* the truth" also), though "in love" (Eph. iv. 15). Often a real, practical difficulty to discover the exact line, between the nicely balanced conditions and the closely pressing, subtle perils, of unfaithful kindness, on the one side, and of harsh and repellent fidelity on the other. Truth at all costs, and with all risks, of course; but, wherever possible, loving, or at least courteously spoken, truth; and this both for the sake of the person concerned, and for the success of rebuke administered, or the improvement desired. A friend may in kindness *wound*; an enemy may in malice *kiss* (Prov. xxvii. 6). If the *friend* can do his work with a kiss, so much the better. 2. Paul himself shows how possible it is to pay a well-turned, serviceable compliment with the most perfect truth. Acts xxiv. 10 (to Felix), xxvi. 2, 3 (to Agrippa), were quite true and

appropriate things to say; Acts xxiv. 2, 3 (Tertullus to Felix) was notoriously untrue. [Very courteously—accepting the correction (though not too courteously made), and acknowledging a measure of fault in himself—did he recover himself, after his outburst of not unjustifiable indignation before the High Priest (Acts xxiii. 5). On Paul's courtesy, see Howson, Hulsean Lectures, *Character of St. Paul*, ii.] Jowett, Stanley, and others call Paul "a gentleman," who, in 1 Cor. xiii. 4-7, draws "The Portrait of a Gentleman." 3. Here Paul, dealing with these suspicious, proud, touchy Corinthians, some of them not too well affected towards himself, *displays Tact and Truth.* (1) "*I, not to say you*" (ver. 4), delicately shifts the heavier pressure of possible "shame" to the shoulders which ought not to have it to bear. (2) Quite true that both would certainly have to share the burden, if by their unreadiness they make its incidence necessary at all; his Christian love offers, as it were, to assume the heavier share, whilst, suggestively leaving the way open to their own love, to save "shame" both to him and them. (3) Also it was quite true that, as matter of absolute necessity, it was "superfluous" for him to say even as much as he had said in chap. viii. The Corinthian contribution to the Relief Fund was evidently substantially ready, and had been "ready a year ago." At most, what was wanted was the closing up of the accounts. What he adds here is to quicken the finishing up of the business; there never had been any need to suggest to, or press upon, their "forward mind" the making of a collection. His courtesy is perfectly truthful. So also ver. 6, "I want you to have *what you really deserve*, the credit of seeming, not covetous but, liberal."

II. **Gives full recognition of excellence.**—And this both to themselves and to other Churches. [Rising to a higher example: The Head of the Churches (Rev. ii. 3, *passim*), even in the case of the most unfaithful Church, gladly acknowledges every point which can be praised, even though He must (like Paul here) complain of half-finished work (iii. 2, R.V.). See how He (to Ephesus, ii. 6, after vers. 4, 5) returns to praise a point of excellence, so to speak forgotten in vers. 2, 3.] No need for a Christian to stint or grudge deserved praise. To many temperaments a very needful factor in their improvement. May, as here, be consecrated to the subserving of the interests of the work of God.

III. **Is prudent and business-like.**—1. He has used Corinthian "forwardness" as his lever, to move the not illiberal or tardy, Macedonian Churches. He now lays his plans, and takes his measures, to ensure that there shall be no miscarriage, after so much has actually been done towards the desired result. His repeated and confident laudation of them must not have a not very creditable conclusion and comment, in an *only almost ready* collection. "*Beforehand, beforehand, beforehand*" is, and has been, his watchword (vers. 5, 6, *Stanley*); a true "business principle." [Nelson said he beat the French fleets by always being a quarter of an hour before time.] No need for a Christian man to be worse than a man of the world, "wise in (and for the purposes of) his generation," in such points of practical sagacity. Friction would be saved within the Church, and often scandal from without, if business prudence and good sense were always consecrated to the management of its finances. Business as well as Courtesy may be sanctified to the highest ends. 2. Is there any suggestion of prudence in "handling" even his friend Titus, in the fact that, in regard to this business, he always speaks of "*exhorting*" Titus, rather than enjoining or directing? (viii. 6, 17, xii. 18; 1 Cor. xvi. 12; but so also Timothy, 1 Ep., i. 3). 3. The need of such courtesy of character, and good sense and business aptitude, in the management of men and affairs in the Church, is a strong appeal and claim for their consecration to Christ by those who are endowed with them. [Cf. Num. x. 31: "Thou (Hobab) mayest be to us instead of eyes;" *i.e.* his experience and

training in desert life were wanted, though the host had Jehovah and the Pillar in their midst.]

B. **Christian giving is described.**—1. It is literally "blessing" (= "*bounty*"), in this section of the New Testament, and here only. [So LXX., Gen. xxxiii. 11; cf. the beautiful Hebrew of Prov. xi. 25, "a soul of blessing."] As in the similar use of "grace" for this Corinthian gift, the Divine word is borrowed for the expression of human love between brethren and brethren, Church and Church. [So in the Psalm quoted (ver. 9), "his righteousness (with special application to this *almsgiving*) endureth for ever," is the repetition as to man of the same phrase in the preceding Psalm (cxi. 3) used of God, "His righteousness endureth for ever." (May we venture to give this a similar speciality of application, and say, "His almsgiving to a needy world endureth unwearied and inexhaustible"?) No doubt "righteousness" means more than this, in both instances.] The Christian giver is God's almoner and representative, if his gift is the outcome of a love in his heart for man caught from God's philanthropy (Tit. iii. 4). His *gift* mirrors God's gift on a smaller scale; his *giving* should, in his purpose and manner, be like God's "blessing." 2. (1) It is "sowing"; a disposing of one's wealth which brings back again itself with interest, itself multiplied manifold. The old epitaph has truth in it:—

> "Here lies a man, men thought him mad;
> The more he gave the more he had."

The giver is not the poorer by so much, when he has parted with his gift; he is the richer by so much, in that he has that and all it is to bring by God's blessing. (2) Does the farmer return from his field saying "*grudgingly*," and with a sorrowful heart (ver. 7), "There! All that good seed thrown away and lost"? Yet some Christian givers "go forth *weeping* bearing this precious seed," forgetting that they may complete (in this borrowed sense) the sentence of the Psalm. (3) The wise sower does not even sow "*of necessity*," only going out to his fields in the Spring because, if he do not, he will starve in Winter; and, still less, because of what his neighbour farmers are doing, and what they will think and say of him, if he too do not scatter some seed! (4) The giver who understands that he is a sower goes forth to his giving "*cheerful*"; a holy hilarity may rightly pervade every heart, when a Church is assembled to make some great financial effort for the cause of God. (5) Like sowing, too, in this: Sowing and Harvest are connected in two ways. In Gal. vi. 8 Paul reminds the Galatians [who, as Cæsar testifies of the Western Gauls, their kindred, were inclined to be money-loving] that, *in kind, what* a man sows he reaps. Here he says that, *in measure, as* a man sows *so* he reaps; whether "*sparingly*," or, as God Himself sows when He gives, "with blessings" (R.V. margin), *i.e.* with a heart in his sowing, his giving, which would gladly make all he gives, in intention and effect a blessing. Stint your field of seed, you stint your barn of sheaves. You may choose the measure of your reaping. 3. Such almsgiving is a "*service*" (ver. 12), a "liturgy" in the classical sense, a burden which is obligatory upon those citizens of the kingdom of God whom God has made able, and has officially and formally appointed by making them able, to sustain it for the good of others, their less able fellow-citizens. And yet, 4. It is a "*ministration*," a "diaconate." The wealthy man, or Church, must not remember too vividly his superiority in ability, even whilst he serves and discharges his liturgy (= "administers this service," ver. 12), lest he become the Lord Bountiful to his poorer fellow-citizens in the kingdom of God, instead of the almoner of the true Bountiful Lord. He is the servant on Christ's behalf, of his brethren, fulfilling the office which was first, and most gloriously, held by his Master (Matt. xx. 28, same root word). Again, 5. Here are *the motives which should encourage and regulate giving.*

(1) "As he purposeth in his heart" (ver. 7), admirably expository of the meaning "simplicity" (ver. 11); no by-motives, no consideration of any reflex effect, such as winning the commendation of his fellows; his giving should be the simple, direct, unaffected, unmodified expression of *himself* (for "as the man thinketh in his heart so is he," Prov. xxiii. 7). (2) If the stress be laid upon "purposeth," there come into view some further considerations. There is giving which is almost without purpose; it is done upon the spur of the moment, the mere offspring of the passing impulse, aroused, *and dying*, with the momentary, accidental occasion which appealed to it. There is no thought of the gift before the moment of its bestowal, *hardly any a moment after*. There is no *principle* of benevolence appealed to or trained; and such giving easily becomes the refined selfishness which cannot bear to see or hear of what is painful, and merely buys off the unwelcome, momentary contact with it. There is none of the loving, careful thought about the gift or the assistance, which often gives to even a small kindness its chief value to the recipient, and is always one of its most valuable features to the giver, in its effect upon his own heart and character. Such giving is not rooted in character at all; it is the merest, hasty, perishable, fungoid growth upon the surface of impulse. It does not belong to a plan and habit of benevolence, carefully and considerately formed as in the sight of God, and as an expression of gratitude to Him and a recognition of our stewardship. [Such purposeless giving does some good, and has sometimes a beauty. But it is only the fitful, wild, chance music called forth from the strings of an Æolian harp by the variable force of the breath of impulse or occasional appeal. A settled, steady, purposeful, provided-for benevolence, which chooses its objects, and "*considereth* (say) the poor," is the more beautiful, ordered, coherent melody and harmony of a trained player upon a well-tuned heart.] "Purposeth" speaks, then, of the judgment, as well as of the will, brought into consecrated service. (3) The "*covetous*" man (ver. 6) does as *he* purposeth in his heart, indeed. Covetousness may betray itself, as Paul suggests, not only by entirely refusing to part with anything, but by slowness to give, or to redeem one's promise to give; by not making up the last amounts of the total, until the latest moment when shame or necessity makes it possible to keep the gift in one's own power. The antidote to this incipient covetousness is the *heart* of "blessing" (ver. 6). (4) To encourage giving, the fulness of resource and supply we have in God is suggested. (See Separate Homily.) Little faith, much fear, in regard to their own future and its supply, rather than little love or benevolence, may narrow the liberality of a man or a Church. "Can't afford to part with so much." Paul's words (ver. 8) extend far beyond the immediate occasion; they are a great principle opening out, leading us out, in many directions; in the direction of every conceivable need; but in this place they mean: "Do what is right, what His work or the needs of the poorer brethren call for. Trust Him that, however much you spend, you shall not be spent out. He is able to supply you with all needed 'grace,' that you may supply them your gift and 'grace.' No matter what demand may be made upon you, you may cast back your demand upon Him; He will respond, and see to it that, for this requirement, as for '*all*' others, you shall 'always' have 'all sufficiency.' Nay, it shall be no mere question of sufficiency, whether of His giving or your ability. He will give, and 'abound,' that you also may 'abound' for and in view of 'every good work' which may present its claim upon you. He will not simply make you a full *reservoir*, from which others may be supplied. He will fill you to the overflow, and will make you a living *well*, which is itself always full, and is also ever flowing over, to supply needy ones around. Your 'righteousness' [cf. the *variant reading* in Matt. vi. 1] shall be an inexhaustible fountain for others. Let His ability and full supply embolden you to large doing and to large ventures in benevolence. I called it

'sowing,' and, even so, all you 'sow' shall not only keep you in necessary 'food'; it shall provide more 'seed' for more sowing of the same sort (ver. 10)." [Observe "may abound *unto* every good work"; "enriched *unto* all bountifulness." It is *an end in itself*, worthy that God should provide you against it, that you should be able to exercise benevolence. Giving is no *ad libitum*, dispensable accompaniment of a Christian life. The Christian should work (Eph. iv. 28), plan, gain, *that he may have* something to give. Also observe—a large general principle also—that God's gifts, of all kinds, are not given only for our own sake; our temporal good, our gifts of character, of religious knowledge and experience, are all to be the means of bounty to others; they were given for that.] Lastly, 6. We have the happy issue and effect of such Christian benevolence. The need of the poor saints is supplied—that is much; but it is more that God's altar is loaded with the offering of their thanks. God Himself is "glorified" by this abundant praise, for it is His grace in you which prompts the charity; you are manifestly a triumph of the power of the Gospel, and not least does it glorify Him that, Jewish Christians though they are, their heart goes out in grateful, admiring, yearning affection to you Gentile Christians. Your gift draws closer the bounds of living, loving unity in the Church of your common Lord.

C. **God's giving and gift the model and motive** (ver 15).—1. God's Christ is also, like theirs, a "grace" and a "blessing." How it has "enriched us"; and how He Himself was first "enriched *unto* all bountifulness"! Rich beyond our expression or conception, but not for Himself only; to Himself it was *an end in itself* that He might "sow" in our needy world "bountifully" "with blessings." He, too, had "all *self*-sufficiency" [see the Greek word, ver. 8] "in all things" which His nature and happiness required. In Himself there was (to speak in children's stammerings) another Self, the "Son of His love" (Col. i. 13), Who could receive and give love, as love must in its very nature desire. Yet He created, and so provided Himself with new objects upon which His heart might pour out its "bounty." He must be giving; must be going out of Himself to make others happy. Further, 2. (1) His gift is the expression of His "character." It "*sits well*" upon him, this *habit* of giving. He is *clothed* with bounty in all His manifestation of Himself, and the robing fits perfectly; it is the expression of Himself. He has put Himself into His unspeakable Gift, and into the manner of His giving. As the Corinthians should do. [Note also that the consummate expression of God's character, His greatest mercy, is a **Gift**. His children speak as if He loved to take away, rather than to let them keep, anything dear to them. They are afraid to make full surrender of their Isaacs, lest they should really have to "slay their sons"; though God does not want the Isaac, unless it has become an idol; He wants *them*, their will, their whole heart, and whole self. They half-look out for some trial or bereavement, after a great blessing. Yet the one great Precedent He has set for all His dealing with us, the one conclusive Index to His real mind and heart toward us, is a **Gift**—an unspeakable gift. He had rather give, or let us keep, than take from us, if it be safe for our welfare. He had rather say "Yes" than "No" to our prayers. He does not value or enjoin upon us sacrifice, self-denial, for their own sakes; they are only means to an end. He will accomplish His training of His children with the *minimum* of pain and surrender and loss. His love is *donative* rather than *privative*. God is by His very nature a **Giving God**.] [Note also, 1. A Gift, not a Loan. We shall need, and may keep, the Christ He gives us, to all eternity. Neither in caprice, nor in change of plan, will He ever revoke, or take back, His bounty. We may cast it away; He has no purpose to take it away. 2. A Gift, for which nothing has to be paid by us. Nothing, of course, could buy it; but we may have Christ, and all that goes along with and is contained in Him (2 Cor. i. 20,

R.V.), for the asking and the taking.] (2) He gives "as He purposeth." His "purpose" (Rom. viii., *passim*, etc.) is of course an anthropomorphism. To Him Who sees at once perfectly, in all its completeness, first and last, His whole design, any such word as implies consideration, possible modification of first thoughts, laborious comparison of ends with means, patient, persistent maturing of a plan, is quite inapplicable. Yet we see Him act as men do when they "purpose," and in this Gift of His we see an end carefully considered, proposed to Himself, secured by admirably chosen means, "in the fulness of time," after being prepared for through many centuries, each of which, in its whole character and conditions, contributed something to the perfection of the execution of God's purposed bounty to fallen man. His was no impulsive Giving, the act of a moment without consideration or after-care. (3) "In His heart." Human language again. But there is human giving which is admirable and very effective in its well-judged, well-timed assistance, but which is hard, stern, and apt to become mechanical. On the other hand, there is giving which has all these elements, contributed by a perfect judgment, but which has them all made warm and tender with a pervasive love. The heart infuses itself into the judgment. God's mercy is *tender* mercy. (4) His bounty also "aboundeth, by many thanksgivings, unto God." Indeed, when human bounty calls them forth, it is awakening part of that great chorus of praise, whose increasing volume will fill heaven to eternity. 3. His Gift is *the* motive of all acceptable, all real, *Christian* feeling. Other motives may be consistent, and may co-exist with this; some motives are entirely incompatible with this, and will either expel or be expelled by this; *e.g.* ostentation, mere love of praise, the deliberate laying oneself out to win a reputation for bountifulness [as did Ananias and Sapphira, desiring to have the praise which everybody was giving to Barnabas, but to have it at the cheapest possible rate]; the more sordid aim to make a profit out of such a reputation. But even the sympathy, pity, love, etc., which are consistent with it, lose their last touch of perfectness and of acceptableness with God, if they are not accompanied by, and indeed are not born of, the grateful love which springs from a sense of our indebtedness for the Unspeakable Gift. To awaken real, active, *Christian* benevolence let men betake themselves to Calvary, and stand beneath the cross; considering what, in all directions, it means that He should hang there. (See this followed out in Separate Homily.)

## *SEPARATE HOMILIES.*

Ver. 8, first clause. *A general truth*, which may be pressed, beyond the particular, immediate application of it by Paul. Widen also "*Grace.*"

"*God is able . . . all grace abound.*" —This rebukes, I. **Narrow Giving.**— 1. "God loveth a cheerful giver;" He has amongst His children many *fearful* ones. They restrict their gifts to religious and charitable purposes, not because they are niggard, but because timid. [Old, sadly true witticism applies to many: "Some men give according to their *means*; some according to their *meanness.*" Not so here, but] they are apprehensive about the possibilities of the future. It is not one umbrella, but a stock of them, which can alone give them any approach to rest and security against the "rainy days" which, to them, loom many and dark in the future. Addison has acutely noted in the *Spectator* how the fear of *seeming* poor makes some men prodigal beyond their means, whilst the fear of *being* poor makes some save beyond their need. It makes some Christians narrow in their givings. They do not feel comfortable without a fair, growing reserve behind them. If they are "close-handed," it is not primarily from want of *love*, but from want of *faith*. 2. Text bids them remember

that they have behind them a Reserve, —**God**; and then let them launch out into all suitable, all needful, liberality to poverty or the cause of religion. Let Him, His fulness of supply, His ability to provide in any possible emergency, become real to them, and their fearful heart will readily yield to its truer, its native instinct, and open their hand more widely. [The possibility of being stripped of all, *except* **God**, is however often met with the same instinct of heart, as prompted the lady-passenger's reply to the captain of a steamer in great peril at sea; said he, "We must now trust in God, Madam." Said she, "Captain, *has it come to that?*"]

It rebukes, II. **Narrow Living**, in a spiritual sense. 1. All Churches are weakened, their work is often crippled, by the meagre, narrow, ineffective life of their members. Very much of the effort of the pastorate has to be expended in keeping them not below what is the *minimum* of requirement and experience, if there is to be a definitely, distinctively, Christian life at all. 2. Such members lament their own failures, and "shortcomings" (calling by this too-indulgent name some plain faults and sins). Yet they have no idea of being, or doing, better. They have no hope of any "higher life," whether in the half-technical sense or in any other. At most that "is a beautiful ideal, but quite unattainable by ordinary people, under the ordinary conditions of life." They admire a higher, larger, fuller, more satisfying, victorious life in a far-off way, but without making effort or extending hope towards it. With the best type of them it is not spiritual indolence, though it may degenerate into it. The confession of failure may by often repetition lose its original contrition or compunction, and even become to them a virtuous humility. "They do not pretend to the great things, the great doings, of some people! God forbid such spiritual blindness or pride!" 3. But there is no virtue in being poor in attainments when God would have them rich, and has made provision for their enrichment. Or in being hampered by evil habits, enshackled and embarrassed and made ineffective, when God can give, and desires to give, liberty and victory (1 John v. 4, 18, etc.). There is no modesty, or humility, if the son of a wealthy father lives in narrow circumstances, half-starving, in rags, when he may draw upon his father's wealth. "What cannot your Father do? Is such a life His probable ideal and purpose for His children? Will it even enable them to answer His design in having a Church? Is it any glory to Him that such should be the best lives the world sees in His family?" [This may be enlarged upon.] 4. Call things by their right names. Some things grace does not pretend to remedy —these are *infirmities*; some things it is *meant* to remedy—these are sins, if allowed. "Shortcomings" may mean that Christians are human, or that they are low down in grace; these latter grace is meant *perfectly* to remedy. "God is able." There is no humility in repeatedly yielding to, even though confessing and bewailing, temptations or habits, which God has made provision for overcoming. Connect with Christ's words: "That they might have [life] more abundantly." (Same root word as here.) Wordsworth wrote to Lady Beaumont, in May 1807, of the purpose of his poetry: "To add sunshine to daylight, by making the happy happier." In higher fashion, that is God's desire for us. Therefore:

It rebukes, III. **Narrow prayer and faith.**—1. Ask and expect large supplies of mercy, peace, strength, providential guidance,—everything. (1) "According to His riches in glory" (Phil. iv. 19). As the boys at a public school are provided with clothes, pocket-money, etc., more or less liberally as their fathers can afford to do it; each providing for his son "*according to his riches*," greater or less. So God "according to *His* riches." (2) "According to your faith," "according to Thy word"; couple these. See man

and God looking into each other's heart. Man sees the willingness; God sees the want. Utter need here; all supply there. "Help me; fill me!" "Let Me help; let Me fill." Is all that infinite, ready, pledged fulness, to be constrained, constricted, hindered, measured by, the gauge of man's faith? An ocean can only pour into the vessel plunged into it what the vessel can hold, or the neck will admit. God promises; God is able to give, abundantly to give; how large is, not the need, but the basket of faith? He is honoured by expecting more from Him. Elizabeth said laughingly to importunate Raleigh, "When will you have done asking?" "When your Majesty has done giving!" God loves that kind of "shamelessness" (Greek of Luke xi. 8). Meer Jaffier, Nabob of Bengal, took Clive into his treasury at Moorshedabad, set open before him door after door of treasure-chambers full of gold, silver, gems, and bade him ask for his own present. Clive, when charged in after-years with wrongful enrichment at the expense of native princes, replied, as to this particular instance, "By ——, I am astonished at my own moderation. I asked twenty lacs of rupees, when a word would have made it forty." Paul's words lead us into God's treasury of "all grace," and invite us to ask and receive, that our need may be filled. God is not honoured by any "moderation" in our prayers or faith. There are limits to the literal, crudely conceived "answer" to prayer. God is not merely the obedient worker-out of every erroneous, selfish, or whimsical wish of His people [like the familiar of some mediæval Faust]. But, in the larger view of the purpose and scope of His promise, and provision of "all Grace," within the wide, all-including, lines of the life of grace, there is nothing needful we may not ask, and should not ask.

May add, IV. "*Not as the world giveth give I;*" true of the Father as of the Son. World gives such gifts as it has, up to a certain point; sufficient for some surface needs of our nature, and going a certain way; but not "*all* grace," nor going all the way, "to the uttermost." [In the summer days we may do with an empty grate, or gilded shavings; but when the winter time for age and heart come upon men, the world cannot give the real fire which alone can serve the soul's necessity.]

Ver. 15. *The Unspeakable Gift.*— 1. "Unspeakable" a wonderful word. The root is also in "*exegesis.*" The two-fold prefix to this root is graphic in the idea it suggests. "A gift of whose whole meaning there can be no adequate exegesis," we might say; or, more exactly, whose whole contents no guide can explore and open up, and exhibit to his fellow-explorers. They may strike paths across the whole extent of thought covered by it; may strike them out in many, intersecting directions. They will discover much; on either side of any path so marked out and followed, will be a wealth of beautiful and helpful truth. But they are never at an end of all discovery. *They never will be.* Even the study and scrutiny of heaven, with its wider knowledge and appreciation of, not only the facts and the mercy in any individual redeemed life, but of the bearings of the Gift upon the history of our whole Race, and, perhaps, of unknown and unnamed races in other worlds, and that study pursued with new helps, and new powers, and with Himself perpetually before their eyes, will only bring mind and heart back again and again to the same conclusion,— "**Unspeakable.**"

2. (1) Stand at the Cross and *think backward* along the line of His one continuous existence, in glory which He had with His Father before the world was, in the bosom of the Father, before all things began to be through Himself; *think forward*, as again He leaves the world and goes to the Father, and He assumes the throne of the majesty on high; forward again through, and past, the mys-

terious moment when He delivers up the kingdom to God, even the Father, only to receive and exercise the more glorious authority of a yet greater, an eternal, kingdom. At the Cross remember that the three-and-thirty years on earth are an episode, a subsection of the whole unbroken life of The Son, stretching backward and forward with the absolute eternity of God. Remember that He is at that point touching His lowest of voluntary *kenosis*; that that humiliation is the mid-point of the history of the Son of God, obedient, even to this degree, that He should die on a cross, a malefactor, and forsaken even of God. Remember Who He is; why He is there, *thus;* what it means of self-surrender on His part, and of devoting love (Rom. viii. 32) on the Father's part;—"**Unspeakable!**" (2) Consider—as He had done—the case of fallen, lost manhood, in its sin; and that sin the source of an outflowing stream of consequent misery, shame, fear, suffering, here; consider how it must have flowed on through eternal ages, broadening, deepening, darkening, and *must* still flow on, except so far as modified by His grace and its blessed effects. Consider what, in even one redeemed life, here and hereafter; and what in the totality of all redeemed humanity; are the happy effects of that Gift, another stream, broadening, deepening, more and more gloriously bright, through eternal ages. "**Unspeakable!**" Endeavour to conceive the revolutionising change which would come over, and pervade, everything in human life and in the world's condition, if now the grace of this Gift, and its whole effect upon Life, History, Providence, Morals, were withdrawn. What a cataclysmic deterioration and ruin of all! The gift which gives so much, and holds back so much,—"**Unspeakable!**" (3) Eph. iii. 10 widens the view almost beyond our grasping. What if the thirty-three years of His earthly life, and if, especially, the Friday afternoon of Calvary, be the central point, around which turns and pivots the history of "the principalities and powers in the heavenly places," and indeed of the whole creaturely Universe? "**Unthinkable,**" not to say "**Unspeakable!**"

3. Yet where is the wonder, when remembered that it is "**God's** unspeakable gift"? If He has expressed *Himself* in it, how can the contents of the **gift** be put into human thought and language? And, with a more homely turn to the thought, "Such a gift is *just like Him,*" as said an old believer, of some smaller and yet heart-astonishing mercy. The principle of his words is true of this crowning, consummate gift. Only it is *not* "like all else He does"; "All else He does is like this." What shall we not expect after this! (Rom. viii. 32 again). "All grace, abounding," indeed! What shall we not do, and give, having such an Example, and debtors for such a mercy!

Ver. 15. (Alternative suggestion for a Homily.)—We may take the last subsidiary thought suggested by this verse, and follow on this line: "This first, greatest, unspeakable, Gift is a measure of all God's after-gifts to us. What, how much, may we not expect?"

I. **God has thus set a precedent.**—The principle lies in Ps. lxviii. 10, *when the whole verse is quoted.* Thus: The deliverance from Egypt was the birthday, and in a sense the greatest day of the nation's life. It receded farther and farther into the past, but never sank out of sight below the horizon of the national view. The remotest distance of long antiquity never became a *dim* distance in the case of this event. It stood out, vast, clearly definite. That beginning of all God's dealings with the covenant nation, as such, fixed the *style* and the *scale* of all His dealings with them. The prophets, *e.g.*, who cheered the hopes of the Babylonian exiles, appealed to this. It was a Godlike beginning of their history; every after-step might be expected to be Godlike too. So Calvary and the Lamb of God are

in thought, though not in time, the starting-point of God's redemption for, not one nation, but the race. That was the World's Passover and Exodus. It had been seen, dimly, from the gate of Eden. It grew clearer as the race, in its four thousand years' pilgrimage, approached it. We have passed it to-day. Time is leaving it behind. But it, too, does not *grow dim* in the distance. And we may measure every hope of redemption, every petition for mercy, every request for even temporal deliverance, by that Precedent, **The Unspeakable Gift**. He began with that! He will not fall below that level!

II. **God then began what He designed and desires to finish.**—Jesus never more Godlike than when He bowed His head and cried, "It is finished!" Finished work is the characteristic of God's work. Just as the deliverance from Egypt (Psalm quoted above) was not intended to stand alone, but was the beginning of a great redeeming work whose crowning particular was to be a Settlement in Canaan; so that unspeakable gift and the finished work of Calvary, with its imitative sequel in the new birth in our own heart, was not intended to stand alone. A perfected moral renewal, a life in perfectly renewed surroundings, and fitted for a perfected, eternal service—*Holiness in Heaven*—was the intended, the implied, sequel of the Gift. "Into Canaan" was the corollary of "out of Egypt." "Into Holiness, up to Heaven," is the corollary of the Gift on Calvary. We are only asking, then, for what is in effect provided and assured, when we ask for "all grace abounding," "all sufficiency," etc.,—all needful to bring us into all the Holy Consequences, our whole Heritage of blessing. *God laid such* a glorious Foundation; will He not finish the building?

III. [Is it too human to say it?] God sunk so much—invested so much—in the gift of His Son to our race, that He will not lose all, for lack of following it up. We may "receive the grace of God *in vain*," certainly (vi. 1). But we may, at all events, *count upon Him*. It cost *that* much to bring a believer up to his present point. God will not willingly let go all that · the God of the Unspeakable Gift!

Ver. 15. A subordinate thought may be developed into **a Christmas sermon**—*God's Unspeakable Gift*. The benevolence of Church to Church recalled to Paul's mind the benevolence of God to a needy, lost world; the root and source of all human benevolence, and especially of all *Christian* bounty. (Develop as in previous homiletics.) The bounty of the Christmas season necessarily recalls it to us. Christmas is pre-eminently the children's festival. The overflow of affection to the children at this season is closely connected with the fact that when God blessed the world with His **Unspeakable Gift**, that **Gift was a Child**, and not at once a full-grown man. Why? The reason is in its fulness *unspeakable*, no doubt; past human exegesis. Yet we may see some reasons:—

I. **He was thus "grafted into," "welded to," the race upon which we spring.**—*He* thus *sprang from it* also. Cf. the angels. They are so many independent creations of God's will; men spring generation out of generation. Angels are, probably, from the first all contemporaries in age. We are successive. They are many; we are One. A full-grown Christ sent into the world, would have been *one more individual* added to the millions of the race; *a* man with men. But He is born of the race, *Man* with men. Perhaps He could not really have been our Redeemer had He not thus been *of* us.

II. **His life thus better parallels our spiritual life.**—He shares temptation with us; we share the cross with Him. In a Christian life as well as in Christ's life there are a Crucifixion, a Resurrection, an Ascension into the heavenly places (Eph. ii. 6, etc.). Our life is hid in God, along with Christ. And to make the parallel

—the *more than* a mere parallel—complete from the first, there is a Birth for Him, as there is a new birth for us. It is only in John's Gospel that we find the *words*, "Ye must be born again." But in the Synoptics Christ put *the truth* into visible form. "Took a little child and set him in the midst, and said, 'Except . . . as little children ye shall not *enter* into the kingdom." The man enters into the kingdom as a *child*; he must be *born* again. The lesson is thus symbolised to the very eye, when we see the King entering the kingdom by the gate of *birth*. God's Gift was *born* into the world.

III. **He has thus ennobled humility.**—His religion has had to ennoble the word itself. The world scorned the thing and depreciated the word. Christianity brought Humility forth from obscurity, robed her in honourable garments, and made her a queen amongst the virtues, the flower and perfecting of holiness. Socially, Jesus chose to begin at the lowest round of the ladder. The *child* of a country carpenter's wife is the Redeemer of the race. Pride cannot live where that fact tells. Pride is subtle; may be strongest in the very class from which Christ sprung. "No pride like poor folks' pride." But whether high-class or poor-class pride, it must die in the presence of the fact that God's Unspeakable Gift made His appearance amongst us, a peasant's swaddled infant lying helpless in a mere make-shift cradle, a manger in an Eastern *khan*.

IV. **He has thus learned, by living it, a perfect sympathy with our human life, and that from the beginning of it.**—Has "skipped" no stage of it, up to manhood's prime. When man has passed his prime, the forces which make for disintegration and death begin to turn the scale against those which make for recuperation, nutrition, growth, life. The man begins to die from the earliest moment when the balance turns against life. Jesus never passed the point of prime, but in the prime of manhood met Death in its prime of strength and conquered it. From birth to manhood life is victorious; it is the best of our life. And *all that best He knew*, knew from its beginning. There is no stage of our life—its infancy, its childhood, youth, early years of gathering strength, first years of toil, manhood of breadwinning and responsibility and struggle—which He has not learned to understand, as having lived through it. When we pray for help, He has the sympathy of *experience* with all stages, *even the earliest*.

V. **Above all, the Gift thus became the children's Christ.**—If Christian children have so happy a Christmas Day, they owe it to Christ. At the very best, no father or mother in heathen lands, of old time or now, quite think of children and deal with them as true Christian parents do. No classical poet ever drew poetry from childhood. Infanticide cannot live in lands where a Christ is known, Who was God's Unspeakable Gift, and yet was a baby. A baby is a holy thing for His sake. Childhood is a happy time and holy, because of His childhood. Every boy may feel that Christ understands him. And every girl too; for just as no woman ever feels that, because He is a man, Christ does not understand her, so no girl need fear that, because He was a boy, Jesus does not understand her. In His perfect manhood there was perfect childhood, boyhood and girlhood all in Him. Say to the child: "Jesus was once exactly of your age, to a minute; He was exactly your height once, to a hair's breadth. If you had gone, A.D. 5 or 6, into Nazareth to seek God's Unspeakable Gift, you would have found a lad of eight or nine at school, wearing a little close-fitting cap, and a loose garment tied round with a sash, sitting on the ground, spelling His letters from a passage copied out of the Hebrew Bible, or writing upon a piece of board with chalk. He understands about going to school, and holidays, and play. He understands children's troubles, and

what children's sins are, *though He never did any.* Gentle and obedient, patient and diligent and truthful, we may depend He was; the model of all that is right for boys and girls, as well as for men and women." God gave His **Unspeakable** Gift *to children.*

V. The wonder of it! The central figure of History is Jesus of Nazareth, God's Christ. When the time was come to bring His Only Begotten into the world, God "*took a little Child and set Him in the midst.*"

## CHAPTER X.

### *CRITICAL NOTES.*

**Remarkable change of tone** here, and henceforward. So remarkable that—in last century, for the first time, then in beginning of this, and again, after a respite, during the last fifty years—from time to time Higher Criticism has suggested, or claimed, x.—xiii. as a distinct document, perhaps a letter between the two extant Epistles. But Textual Criticism knows of nothing but an unbroken connection with i.—ix. The change [from "we" to "I" (generally); "the conciliatory and affectionate strain of entreaty which pervaded the first part is here exchanged for a tone of stern command and almost menace; there is still the same expression of devotion to the Corinthian Church; but it is mixed with . . . a sarcasm and irony" paralleled in the First Epistle, but not up to this point in the Second (Stanley); also, "the Corinthians are no longer commended for their penitent zeal, but rebuked for their want both of love and penitence" (*ib.*). The confident hopes of the first part of the letter give place to gloomy forebodings] may be sufficiently accounted for by supposing a pause here in the writing of the letter. [Say, a new day's dictation beginning here; or a new amanuensis to be found; or anything else which may conceivably have made a break, during which perhaps new tidings may have come from Corinth; or Paul's mood may have changed, and the darker aspect of matters may have reasserted a predominance over a more hopeful view, during the interval.] Rom. xiv., xv. in less degree contrast with i.—xiii. (Farrar). Vers. 2, 7, 10 [if translate literally "says *he*"], 11, 12, 18, and xi. 4, by (*e.g.*) Farrar, Conybeare and Howson, are supposed, *but not necessarily*, to point out some pre-eminent opponent of Paul. Have to infer from Paul's language—certainly once (ver. 11), and perhaps in other cases (*e.g.* ver. 1), quoting the words and thoughts of opponents—who these were and what were their charges against him. [Like calculating the disturbing cause—perhaps a new planet—from the perturbations it originates in the path and movements of one already known.]

Ver. 1. **Gentleness.**—Same as "moderation" (Phil. iv. 5); also in Acts xxiv. 4; 1 Pet. ii. 18. "Moderation which recognises the impossibility cleaving to formal law, of anticipating and providing for all cases that will emerge; . . . recognises the danger that . . . waits upon the assertion of *legal* rights, lest they should be pushed into *moral* wrongs; . . . pushes not its own rights to the uttermost." [Phil. iv. 5 excellent example.] "All" God's "going back from the strictness of His rights as against men; . . . all His refusals to exact extreme penalties," are the archetype and "pattern of this grace in us." (Trench, *Syn.*, § xliii.) Also, "*meekness*" is passive; seated in the inner spirit; shown by the superior to the inferior; "*gentleness*" is active; exhibited in conduct; shown by man to man, without distinction of higher or lower. "*Meekness*" is that "temper of spirit in which we accept God's dealings with us without disputing or resisting; . . . does not fight against God, and more or less struggle and contend with Him." (Trench, xlii.) He says, further, that this attitude before God makes us bear meekly [*e.g.* as David from Shimei] human provocation. See *this* in Matt. xi. 29; hence Paul's appeal here. *Q.d.* "Let me still have room to exhibit towards you the meekness and gentleness of Christ; do not oblige me to put these aside and bear myself otherwise toward you." **I Paul myself.**—"Think of me, *me*, ME; you know me; you did love me; you owe much to me." Perhaps latter part to be read as if quoted: "Who am (as they go about saying) base." **Base.**—R.V., "lowly"; this and "meek" found together in Matt. xi. 29; significantly. This rendering, however, requires the verse to be read as Paul's own sentiments.

Ver. 2.—"I beseech you, so reform and change [before I come] that," etc. Notice R.V.,

"Show courage"; not same word as in ver. 1. "Count," "reckon," for "*think*." "They have formed their judgment of me and my probable action; I too have considered my plan of campaign against these high-speaking and high-exalted gentlemen and their doings."

Vers. 3, 4.—Cf. Gal. v. 16, 25, "Walk in the Spirit." Paul not afraid of a verbal inconsistency, with a real consistency underneath. **According to** (ver. 3), same word as "*after*" (ver. 4). Cf. Rom. viii. 5-9. **Flesh**, here, for sake of antithesis, used first in a morally neutral sense, and then ["*after the flesh*"] with the more usual evil connotation. "*In the flesh*," more than "in the body," of course, but not more than, "as conditioned by the limitations, liabilities, weaknesses, of innocent, non-moral, human nature; the conditions under which all human workers must do all human work." **Carnal.**—See under 1 Cor. iii. 1; 2 Cor. iii. 3. **Weapons.**—Includes defensive armour; not weapons of attack only. "Fleshly lusts *war* against the soul." Its "instruments" (Rom. vi. 12) are literally "*weapons*."

Ver. 5.—Note, not to the "*obedience*" of Paul, but "*of Christ*." Also "*bringing into captivity*" conveys more than merely making captive; rather "*leading captive*," as in a triumphal procession. Suggested that the form of the imagery here is local, with a colouring drawn from the ruined hill-forts of Rough Cilicia, the western half of the province. Paul may have heard old people in Tarsus tell how, sixty years before he was born, the mountains were infested with pirates, who swept the Levantine seas, sallying forth from many little ports and coves on the coast, and retiring with their booty to inaccessible hill-forts; till at last Pompey the Great had organised a formidable expedition and cleared out the nest of robbers, reducing a hundred and twenty forts to ruins, and carrying captive over ten thousand prisoners. [Must not make too definite or precise; language very general.]

Ver. 6.—Note the happy adroitness of "*your*"; as if suggesting, "*You*, of course, will not do anything but obey, '*fulfilling*' obedience to me—and to Him—completely. Those others, who will not,—well, I shall be prepared," etc. A "gentlemanly" turn of thought.

Ver. 7. **Appearance.**—Same word as "in presence" (ver. 1). "They say that, as to appearance, I look to be nothing and nobody. . . . These very wise people, are they so superficial in their grounds of judgment as that? Do they—you—only go by the surface look of a man, or of things?" [Both indicative and imperative are supported strongly], **Christ's.**—Too definite to refer this to 1 Cor. i. 12: "*I of Christ*." Note [with Beet] that Paul does not allow any personal feeling, or heat of controversy, to lead him to deny that even his opponents may be Christ's; he himself is, at all events, and that is all he insists upon. **Think.**—"Count," "reckon," as ver. 2; and so "*thoughts*" (ver. 5) is "reckonings." Note small change of reading and rendering.

Ver. 8. **Boast.**—First of sixteen occurrences of this word in this section. **More abundantly.**—Than even in vers. 1-5. Does he revert to "*we*," as expressing what is true of all apostles? A significant characteristic of *apostolic* authority. (Repeated in xiii. 10.)

Ver. 9.—Facts will justify Paul. His Master will see to that for him, *so that* his "*letters*" (generalised from the First) may not seem mere empty thunder.

Ver. 10.—Keep "*say they*"; not "*says he*," of an individual. Singular; but like *on dit, man sagt*. R.V.; was "weighty and strong" ironical? Or a real concession, not to be refused even by his opponents? Perhaps (ironically): "He writes very effectively and with vigour—does he not?" **Presence.**—His *Parousia* (literally); the word used of Christ's "appearing." But "appearance," in our colloquial sense, is in the word, as well as "appearing."

Ver. 12.—R.V. tries to keep one of Paul's (favourite) assonances. "*Pair, or compare*" (Waite, in *Speaker*). His own type of man, and, above all, each man himself, was to each his standard of excellence; self-instituted, self-applied. "A mutual-admiration and self-admiration society" (Waite). "We dare not" [same word as ver. 2: "There is one thing I dare not do"] "take up our place in the ranks of such self-satisfied gentlemen—oh, dear, no!" Note the polished sarcasm at the end: "*are not wise*." One expects something very caustic as the conclusion. "What shall I say of these brethren? They—they—they—are—with*out understanding!* We will not say more!" The "weakness" of the remark is its strength and sting.

Vers. 13-16.—"Why do these men come to Corinth at all? They have their province; I have mine." [Perhaps appointed in Acts xv.; see Gal. ii. 7, 9]. Each of us has his "*measure*," his "*boundary*," marked out as with a "*measuring rod*." [Cf. for the thought, Acts xvii. 26. Also, more than a verbal coincidence with the A.V. will be found in comparing Ps. xix. 4 (Hebrew) with Rom. x. 18.] Yet in Antioch, in Galatia, as in Corinth, they dog my footsteps, and only work at undoing my work; on trespass the while! If I am at Corinth, or come to it, I am on my own ground (ver. 14). God put you clearly within my part of the world's field. Indeed, I am intending to make you my base of operations, if you will help me, for a new venture into regions beyond, as yet untouched by anybody, but mine to occupy. See Rom. xv. 18, 24. Illyricum his limit. Nicopolis in Epirus he did perhaps reach, (Tit. iii. 12). [Suggested that his Greek language would not carry him beyond,

into Illyricum.] See this man, "of no appearance," pushing back farther and farther the borderland between "*Gospel*" light and heathen darkness!

Vers. 17, 18.—Another of Paul's parenthetic escapes, from the oppressiveness of an unwelcome topic into a region of broader, clearer, freer, spiritual thought. "Away from men's jealousies, narrownesses, enmities, rivalries; away even from my own enforced boasting! Let us all stand together a moment before **Him**. Who will boast there?"

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Whole Chapter.*

In these two Epistles Paul reveals himself, more clearly than in any other of his writings. This section, x.—xiii., is pre-eminent in this self-portraiture. [As Rousseau's, so these] Paul's "Confessions." In this chapter two companion, complementary portraits of him and his work. In the first a soldier, armed, ready to go on a warlike expedition against his opponents. In the second a pioneer missionary, carrying the knowledge of his Lord into regions appointed as his sphere, where no other had as yet even named Him.

A. **Paul going on campaign** (vers. 1-11).

1. This section is really the *Ultimatum before War is declared and opened.*—He still hopes that it may be averted. He begs (vers. 1, 2) that the necessity of strong measures may not be forced upon him. He had rather come in civilian than in military array, wearing "*the meekness and gentleness of Christ.*" That very spirit, indeed, displayed for eighteen months when he was amongst them, had been misunderstood. The very unobtrusiveness of demeanour, the very silence as to any Apostolic claim to maintenance, the simple, unadorned presentation of the Gospel of a Crucified Saviour,—had all been perversely interpreted as a consciousness of official and personal inferiority to some other apostles and teachers. Yet he is loth to do otherwise, or to bear himself otherwise amongst them, if he comes again. He is willing even yet to hope—against all he hears from his informants—that (ver. 6, latter clause), before he comes, all this big, boastful talking—so bitter against himself,—and all the many shameful and disorderly doings in the very Church, will be put away, and "*the obedience of Christ fulfilled*" by them, at least by all but an insignificant minority of "*disobedient*" ones. The very mildness of such an appeal will, he knows, be again misinterpreted to his disadvantage; this very letter will hardly seem so "*weighty and powerful*" as usual. Yet he does not want to "*destroy.*" Anybody can cast a soul out of the fellowship; nothing is easier than to strike a refractory man off a Church roll; with a word he, as an apostle, can "*deliver a man to Satan,*" with all the awful consequences of such handing over; but this after all is not the main, or his favoured, use of Apostolic power and authority. [So, very rarely did Christ use His power otherwise than for beneficent ends, and never merely to vindicate Himself, or to punish an enemy.] It is given "*to build up, not to pull down,*" or to ruin (ver. 8). It is the glory of an apostle "not to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke ix. 56). Any hireling can abandon or scatter a flock; a shepherd loves to collect or recover them, even to recover one obstinate, persistent wanderer. It is far more difficult to keep a waverer, or a fallen one, in connection with the Church, and to bring him again into living union with the Head; such work is more congenial to Paul's heart. Why *will* they force matters to an extremity by their persistent wrongdoing? (ver. 2). [As above suggested, how all this echoes and embodies the very spirit and attitude of Christ—and so of God—towards rebel sinners. How many an "ultimatum" is sent, full of warning and appeal, before the doom at last falls. God wants peace; the name "*Immanuel*" is the expression of His desire and effort. If men *will* have it "God *against* us," then they must know all the fulness of His power, moving to execute the sentence of His righteous "wrath." That power, too, is "*in readiness to revenge all disobedience, when the obedience of*

*the Church is fulfilled.*" How mighty to destroy; yet how unwilling to set destruction in motion! How lingering His anger; how loth to strike! See, *e.g.*, Christ simply "*withdrawing Himself*" (Matt. xii. 15), and the occasion of it (ver. 14), and the reason (ver. 17).] He is willing even to acknowledge that some of his self-constituted opponents are really "*Christ's*" (ver. 7), in a sense comparable to ("*even so*") that in which he himself is so. They should be allies, not enemies. A very noble trait this in Paul's conduct of the controversy. A very high development of grace in a man, that he can hopefully include amongst those who, however erring or mistaken, belong to the Master, his own, even bitter, personal opponents. Difference of judgment too often dims the eyes of love, till it can recognise no brother in the opposite ranks.

2. (1) Still he can, if occasion demand it, and the issue be forced upon him, come to Corinth "travelling in the greatness of his strength." [Like his Lord again (Isa. lxiii. 1).] Like the Gospel itself, his Apostolic power has two aspects, according as it looks upon those "who are saved" and those "who perish" (2 Cor. ii. 15). [All goodness has its condemning aspect. It can kill, as well as make alive.] He can be the man of daring boldness (ver. 2). The letters were a truer exposition of the man than was that "*weak*" bodily appearance because of which they had undervalued him. He has "*weapons*" in his hand; he is armed for a conflict to the uttermost,—if it comes to that. (What is he thinking of as his weapons of warfare? He could inflict sickness, or death. Yet he can hardly contemplate any extensive use of such an awful prerogative. When he did use it, there was certainly nothing personal in the judicial act; but how easily does such excommunication become "*carnal*"!) They will find him fearless in condemnation, unmoved by the fear or the favour of any in the Church; they will find a force of will they hardly gave him credit for. The disorders in their midst, the sensuality, the party-spirit, the incipient rationalism (to use the modern word),—these must, and should, be done away with. "*Authority*"—against authority,—he would take care to make his prevail. [Again we are reminded of the certain, if delayed, victory of the holiness of God, let evil be borne with long as it may, perhaps only to grow bolder because of the very forbearance. See it "*exalting itself against the knowledge of God*," in an extreme, an aggravated form just before the final crisis (2 Thess. ii. 8). So the room in Jairus's house was filled with scornful laughter, not five minutes before Christ, with the Divine ease of Omnipotence, raised the maiden from death (Matt. ix. 24, and ‖ s).] There are evil days in every Church, when no discipline can be too sharp or prompt, no penalty too severe. There are cancers on the moral life of the Church, for which there is only the knife. Gentle means, gentle remonstrance, calm discussion, are no longer admissible. We pity the offender, but at all costs we must put him out of the ministry or out of the Church. So, also, we may be very sensible of the room there is for varying apprehensions of the same truth, and for varying presentations of it; hardly any one mind, or Church, or age, sees all round it; but there may be "heresy," so obviously such, and so deadly to all spiritual life, or so full of real dishonour to Christ, that no considerations of "liberality," of "breadth," no fear of being called "uncharitable," "narrow," "heresy-hunter," must prevent stern denunciation of error, or the most vigorous action against its teachers. "Peace" is worth much, but not worth the sacrifice of principle. ["*First* pure, *then* peaceable" (Jas. iii. 17).] "Reformation" times, "Disruption" times, all times of conflict for Truth, are rough times. [Campaigning always is. No war is waged without wounds and death.] There must be many things to grieve those who love peace, to whom anything like conflict with brethren is anguish. Bearing witness can always be called obstinate self-pleasing. Discipline will always entail what some will represent as hardship or "*carnal*" revenge. But a Paul must go right on, marching

against the stronghold of Falsehood—practical or doctrinal; the builder-up must sometimes be a fighter, a conqueror, a destroyer. (2) Yet as always remembering that, however personal the temporary, accidental occasions and issues may be, the deep underlying thing at stake is "*the obedience of Christ.*" Paul is only representative in this matter. He stands only for the Apostolic authority to rule or teach or exercise discipline. "War" against him, resistance to his word and authority, is no personal offence merely, or chiefly; it is resistance to "*Christ speaking in him*" (xiii. 3). Thoughts that exalted themselves against himself only,—they would be nothing; but they exalt themselves "*against the knowledge of God.*" Paul is the temporary embodiment of the two principles of a Divine Revelation from God through His Son, and by His Spirit through His accredited human messengers; and, next, of the Government of the Church by Christ, through His Spirit and the Discipline of the Church,—whatever form that may, from time to time and from Church to Church, assume. [Cf. the principle which explains many of the imprecations of the Psalms. In assailing God's Anointed, God's government was assailed. The righteous Sufferer is often suffering, only because men hate Righteousness. It is personal wrong indeed, but the serious aspect of it is the whole attitude towards God and goodness which it reveals; and on that account is God appealed to to punish it.] It is very hard to be thus impersonal, and indifferent *quâ* the bearing of the matter upon oneself; but the aim must not be lower than, nor aside from, this. Paul is not engaging in the campaign on his own account. He is hardly the Commander, except as under his Chief, and as winning a victory for his King. It is hard to purify a Church, or to engage in controversy for the Truth, and yet to keep the motive pure! Very difficult to war for truth or for the purity of the Church, without warring "*after the flesh*,"—very difficult for men who, the holiest and wisest of them, "*walk in the flesh*," with all the limitations and liabilities of poor human nature! ["The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (Jas. i. 20).] The "*weapons*" must not be "*carnal.*" Passion must not be met with passion nor pride with pride. Intemperate language must be met with temperate; overstated orthodoxy will be no defence against overstated, crude unbelief. Discipline must be dispassionate. Force will be no remedy against doubt. Coercion will not save faith. Fulmination of anathemas and excommunications, petty parochial or domestic persecution,—"*carnal*" all!

3. *The enemy* is personal at Corinth.—[*I.e.* it is no mere vague teaching or spirit he has to deal with; but persons, though (see Critical Notes) it is not necessary to suppose that some one prominent man is singled out in these chapters.] Yet the Corinthian opponents are as representative as himself. The real enemy is the "*imaginations*" and "*high things*" which *exalt* and entrench themselves against God. It is the natural heart and the natural intellect—vitiated by the root sin, Pride—arraying themselves against Authority, the authority of God. Hence the form of the passage (vers. 4, 5), which makes it a declaration finding many fulfilments, apart altogether from the particular, historical occasion and exposition. The "*imaginations*," the "*thoughts*," of the natural heart are not morally neutral; the heart is in them. However it may be in mathematics or in natural science, in theology and ethics there is no "dry light," or colourless. Everything is studied, accepted, criticised, rejected, in light which is coloured, either at its source, or by the intellectual or heart medium through which it passes. To bow to authority in any sense is repugnant, because of the proud heart. "Independence" seems noblest; [albeit a perfectly impossible ideal for life or thought;] each man, each faculty, will set up its own particular little hill-fort and stronghold within the man.

4. How calmly assured of victory is this Paul, of no imposing presence,

with no rhetorical address, coming to a powerful, numerous, wealthy Church whose greater part rejected his authority and sneered at his words, only ironically indeed (?) allowing his written words to have force. Paul did clear away the hill-fortresses. Clement's epistle to Corinth shows a Church of a wholly different character and temper.

B. **Paul a pioneer worker.**

I. **He has his province.**—1. Appointed by God (ver. 13); 2. Suited to his natural capacities; 3. This he will occupy to the fullest of its extent (ver. 16); 4. Readily accepting co-operation and support (ver. 15).

II. **His relations to fellow-workers in other fields.**—1. He recognises that they have a sphere appointed to them (ver. 15). 2. Will not interfere with theirs, and expects that they shall not interfere with his (vers. 13, 14). 3. Recognises theirs; not depreciating or envying, or boasting of his own (vers. 17, 18). 4. Does his own work, and gives little or no thought to any comparative estimating of men or of success (ver. 12).

III. **Principles applicable to:** 1. Churches and their fields of labour; 2. Different types of workers in same field; 3. Different orders of work for God.

I. 1. Has his province: "*according to the measure*" marked out by God's measuring-"*rule*" [rod]. For special reasons, Peter had the honour of first reaping in the Gentile harvest-field (Acts xv. 7). He was the real pioneer both to Jews and Gentiles (Acts ii., x.). But at and after the Council, the field was apportioned (Gal. ii. 8, 9). The act of the United Church only recognised and ratified a Divinely-designed division of the world's great field. In the central highlands of Asia Minor, on its western coast, in Macedonia, in Greece, Paul touched virgin soil, dealt with untouched heathenism [except so far as, *e.g.*, in Lydia's case, the presence of Judaism had sent some light into the otherwise unrelieved darkness]. Dangerous work ["have hazarded their lives,"—said of the first missionary inroad into such unevangelised districts (Acts xv. 26)], difficult work, but how honourable to bring the Gospel, and to mention the name of Jesus, for the first time to a country, a city, a soul! [Like the honour of the first captain to break through the boom at Derry and to bring supplies to the famishing people (Macaulay, *History*, chap. vii.). Giving a joy like that of the discoverer of a new remedy, who offers it, and sees its success, in some despairing and desperate case.] 2. The work and the man were fitted for each other. It is not accident or caprice, what worker God chooses for a task. For every task, for every enterprise, there is somewhere the very instrument, the man or woman best of all suited by natural equipment, or by the training of education and surroundings, to accomplish it. It is part of the ever-present, all-complicating "problem of evil," that the Church—and even God—often seem to have to do the work with "second-best" agents. The best are not to hand, or discoverable, by us; He knows indeed where they are, He calls for their service, but they in their awful freedom disregard or refuse the call. Work seems sometimes to languish, because the—obviously well-fitted—worker is unconverted altogether, or, at best, is not entirely devoted to Christ's cause. [Given natural adaptation, then the needful grace may be had, "for the asking"; prayer will always win this. The natural fitness is a *primâ facie* call from God. *Esther's fitness was God's claim upon her* (Esth. iv. 14). He had made her beautiful, and put her upon the throne, with unbounded influence over what heart Xerxes had, "*for such a time as this.*"] Paul had been trained for his special work. His Roman citizenship put him *en rapport* with the Empire; his thorough Jewish culture gave him *entrée* to the Synagogue and the Jewish quarter of a town; the Greek influences of Tarsian boyhood, and, still more, the thoroughness with which he was—beyond perhaps any other apostle or early Christian preacher—emancipated from the prejudice of early training and honest Jewish conviction, so that he apprehended the Gospel

with more nearly Christ's own world-wide view of its adaptation and reach of offer, made him the best to be the pioneer in Gentile lands. [Of natural, physical suitableness, we should have said he had less than some others. Perhaps of no commanding presence; often in poor health; sensitive to slights; unhappy when without sympathetic companionships; soon depressed. His very courage is rather the boldness born of grace, than any special natural courage, which in, *e.g.*, some pioneer travellers seems incapable of feeling fear, or indeed of appreciating danger.] 3. Like his Lord, he desires to say when he lays work down, "It is finished." Literally this can never be. Work grows as it is being done. But, at least, he desires that no part of his special province shall be unvisited [even to utmost Spain (Rom. xv. 24, 28)]; no part without its centre of light, to radiate illumination through the environing darkness; no mass of population without its lump of the new leaven deposited in its centre. He has a holy ambition to be the first to carry the Light of "*the Gospel of Christ.*" So, see him; eagerly hurrying hither and thither as the work calls, and openings (Acts xvi. 6-10) invite; never staying long in any one place [eighteen months in Corinth and three years in Ephesus were his longest voluntary residences in any one centre]; tasting continually the joy of "firstfruits" (Rom. xvi. 5, "*Asia*"; 1 Cor. xvi. 15, Achaia) in the harvest-field. 4. Yet he makes no unwise attempt to do everything himself. Even the pioneer will be stronger and more successful, if behind him there is a company of praying, sympathising supporters, whom first he led to faith, and whose "*faith is*" now "*increased,*" and who can now spare him, and "*enlarge*" him, *i.e.* can set him at liberty to strike out, and can support him "*abundantly*" with their contributions whilst he strikes out into "(*regions*) *beyond*" Corinth. [The pioneer first makes the Church, and then uses it as a basis. The Church should thank God for its pioneer agents, prize them, stand by them, supply the needful means for carrying on and extending the work. No more precious gift of God to His Church than men suitable to be pioneer-men.]

II. 1. Sometimes the pioneer is ensnared by his very consciousness of pioneer gifts and grace. He wants, with a "covetousness" which has its noble side, to cover *all* the field, and not simply his own special section of it. No man has a monopoly of God's work. God has other labourers, as well adapted to their own apportioned province as he himself is to his. His intense preoccupation with his own work, and his very consciousness of special aptitude, prevent him from appreciating other men's work, or from recognising fully that he is not himself fitted for every field and for every form of service. Not so Paul. "*Another man*" has also "*his line*"; [not at all in the modern colloquial sense, but] the measuring-"*rod*" has apportioned a sectional "field" to him. No one man—no one Church—can do everything. Paul has none of that narrowness, which, *e.g.*, cannot say a good word for another man's methods and work, and indeed cannot see them. 2. Hence he refrains from trespassing upon their ground, though he expects [he did not get it!] the like consideration. 3. His "independence" of spirit (ver. 16) is by no means the subtle self-com placency, the vanity, which makes a man "*boast,*" "Ah! I was the first to enter Corinth for Christ! No man had proclaimed Jesus in Galatia until I went! Everybody had missed such-and-such a man, until I took him in hand!" That would be a spirit fatal to success, because cutting the man off from the Spirit of God, in Whose strength he can alone hope to succeed. He will not boast of what he is honoured to do even within his own "*line.*" *The Lord does it all!* (vers. 17, 18). Much less will he intrude into another man's, and then boast of what he has done "*without*" (*i.e.* outside) his "*measure.*" [As the Judaisers did: "See how many more of Paul's people we have won over to '*circumcision* as well as Christ'! Gal. vi. 13: "glory in your flesh."] Depreciation, envy, boast-

ing,—all these are strangers to his work and motives. No; it is the Lord's errand, the Lord's field, the Lord's work, the Lord's labourers, the Lord's success. He will "make his boast" only "in the **Lord**." 4. He therefore simply goes on with his Master's work. He will neither make himself the standard for others, nor for himself; his own ways and plans and even mannerisms of success shall not be made the absolute Right; nor will he trouble himself very much about the "*comparison*" which men are drawing—and his own heart would naturally help them—between him and his fellow-workers. The Lord keep him and them all humble together, and bless their labour with all success, even as he desires to be blessed in his own! [Real danger for workers, nervously anxious about their own qualifications and progress in work, to be continually looking away from themselves—their own spiritual life and their own diligence—and eagerly scrutinising others. Very easily leads to distrust of God, to envy, to despondency, if they suffer by comparison; and to self-sufficiency, if the result of their examination seem flattering to themselves. Better to leave others to themselves and to their work and their Master; to go quietly on with our own, leaving nothing undone that we can compass, to fulfil our own task and cultivate our own special field. "*Comparison*" work is poor work, ill-spent time and thought!]

III. The Churches should carry out the principles, 1. In the arrangement of their work. In some mission-fields, and very often at home, there is waste of activity, of appliances, of plant, of men, by "overlapping." There are, indeed, calls to enter, which no Church may refuse to listen to. "Open doors" of circumstance and providence compel new enterprises in towns, in mission-fields, where some workers at least are already labouring. But usually the special, temporary call (like that of Peter above) is soon superseded by the paramount considerations which the common sense and the right, catholic, heart of the Church, being herein the expression of the mind of the Lord, dictate; securing some mutual concession and arrangement, dividing the field, leaving each Church in possession of its own "*measure*" and "*line*" and province. The spirit which brought Paul's rivals to Galatia and Corinth,—to reap where he had sown—to pull up, rather, what he had sown, in order to put in their own seed—to steal away from him for themselves, and for their own particular shape of "the Gospel," the converts whom he had first won for Christ; the selfish competition that follows into a field already brought under cultivation, rather than begin on the untouched forest or the mere waste moorland, in some "regions beyond" the area occupied by the Churches;—these have too often had their individual and their Church embodiment in later ages. Even intense zeal should respect the (perhaps very different kind of) work of other men. 2. God has embodied the principle of apportionment of province and work, in the history of the Truth in His Church. The Churches—the local, national, confessional subsections of The Church—have in the occasions of their divisions, and in their relations to each other, given reason for scorn to the World and pain to every heart which is true to the Unity of the Body. Yet, as always, the historical, providential fact has had its Divine as well as its human aspect. Namely this: Truth is too large a thing for any one mind, or Church, or age to grasp and present, in its all-round completeness. Men, Churches, centuries, have been complementary in their testimony and their work. They have emphasised (have often had their Divine *raison d'être* for origin and continuance as separate communions, in the need that they should emphasise) now this aspect, now that; perhaps one which was neglected by the rest, or which, by an undue emphasis upon some complementary aspect, had been obscured, or thrust into unmerited discredit; or perhaps one which was specially needed by the man or the time. [Hardly a heresy which has not been an attempt, at first, to recover or express some forgotten phase or portion of truth; becoming a "heresy," erroneous or mischievous, because, in its turn, crude or

ill-balanced in its representation, and failing to do justice to the part of the Whole which others saw and tried to utter.] We may conceivably hold a Church, one in Creed and in organisation, to be in ideal the Best. As matter of fact, the Churches, the ages, the teachers, have each borne their witness to the phase and portion of the Truth which God's work needed. True Catholicity of spirit recognises that each has a "*measure*," a "*line*," a province. 3. True Charity as between worker and worker demands the recognition of the principle, "to every man his work" (Mark xiii. 34). The pulpit will understand the student's desk, the student will understand the preacher, the evangelist the expositor, the expositor the red-hot evangelist; the worker amongst the facts of criticism of Revelation will not in his library undervalue the country pastor, with his crudely simple, "old-fashioned" views of the Bible, nor will the plain, homely, believing worker be suspicious of the critic; the theologian will give and may ask patient, trustful respect for motives and work, in his relations with the man of science. Each is cultivating his own portion of the field, for the advantage of the Lord of the Whole field; there will therefore be mutual respect, reciprocal non-intrusion in any hostile sense, no mere self-centered comparison of worker and worker, with disparaging thoughts and words concerning "the other" as the issue. There are different types of worker and different orders of work for God.

Also IV. (vers. 17, 18). The end of the day of toil brings all the Churches, and the workers in all the ages and fields and methods, together before their Common Master. Each brings in his "results"; converts won; fields of knowledge and branches of inquiry secured for Christ; ages or countries and nationalities Christianised, in their literature, their legislation, their social life and its daily moralities; each lays all down before the Lord Christ; and even as His "Well done" is heard, acknowledges that all the success has been His Gift. To-day, and in that day, the man, the Church that glorieth, must let the glorying be "*in the Lord.*" ["So that, as in my former letter (1 Cor. i. 31), I said to you of your own personal standing and life in and before God—'He that glorieth,'" etc.] Applause from our own Church, or contemporaries, or *coterie*, will be valued only as it bears bringing into the presence of Him Whose "*approval*" is the one absolute, eternally true verdict. His "*approval*" after His "*proving*" of the work and the worker,—that only is the satisfying, safe ground of self-gratulation. If He say, "Well done," then only, whatever be the verdict from others, may our heart say to itself, "Well done."

## *SEPARATE HOMILIES.*

Ver. 5. *The Conflict of Faith with Undue Exaltation of Intellect.*

I. 1. N.B. *Undue* exaltation. Religion can have no quarrel with really moral and reasonable intellect, or with human thought that recognises its own weakness and limitations. The *arrogance* of the pretensions of human thought speaks of a fall, an early, radical convulsion and upheaval which has disturbed the original harmony between reason and revelation. Intellect is the ally, and discoverer, of truth; its highest employment is to be the instrument of *religious* truth. 2. Also *fallen* reason is generally enslaved to desire; not free, but unconsciously working at the secret bidding of an irritated passion. Or, working half-conscious of its bondage, for that reason asserts its freedom especially as against the Revelation of God, with nervous, exaggerated vehemence. 3. There is (1) Mercenary Intellect, in bondage to sharp necessity (as it, sometimes reluctantly, thinks), or to the mere spirit of gain. "Cannot afford to have a conscience." (2) Self-advertising Intellect. Will be "original," at whatever cost. Takes some subtle

delight in perturbing the religious world with its startling assertions, made to win notoriety. (3) Sensualised Intellect. Whole literatures, with their fertility of thought, beauty of language, ample power, aiming to excite basest passions. (4) Self-reliant, cynical Intellect; the slave of a sublime egotism. But its enslavement is disguised, and its cold, clear, incisive energy passes for the very bloom and majesty of perfect intellectual freedom. 4. True there are nobler types amongst the opponents. Their true house is the Church; but they have not yet found *the way to Damascus*. They may safely be left to God.

II. Note, intellectual opposition to Revelation, in the second generation, when the great occasions are over, and the great captains are gone, oftenest takes refuge on some natural heights, or behind some artificial earthworks—some unproved assumption, some disputed principle. *E.g.* (1) Will admit *no room for faith*; assumes to know and command the whole field of truth; assumes that there is no higher sphere accessible to man than those of sense and reason. But science never fixes limits to its possible range of inquiry and knowledge. Above the reach of telescope, below that of microscope, it believes in regions of fact hitherto unexplored. No reasonable ground of jealousy if beyond the farthest reach of natural science there be a region real, but unknowable by its powers and instruments of observation. Reason can prove much: an immaterial soul; freedom of will; the righteousness of the judgment of conscience; a First Cause, Who is One, personal, infinite, free, to be obeyed by His creatures. This much, perhaps; with a progress assisted by supernatural guidance, but also disputed at every step. But no more. Death, the Trinity in Godhead, Sin, its removal; of these reason knows nothing that can help the deepest need of the soul of man. She should be faith's handmaid, not its substitute. (2) Granted a supernatural, revealed sphere of truth; then, next, reason will have *no mystery* in it, nothing unverifiable or beyond the grasp of reason. An unreasonable assumption to take; we no judges beforehand of what a Revelation should contain. Further, a mystery is a truth, though one hidden from direct knowledge or unassisted inquiry. Also nature is full of mysteries; Life is a thing really unknown to us. So is Force. The higher we mount in the scale of being, the more there are of these hidden truths. To have rid our thought about these great truths of all objection because they are full of mystery, is to have "cast down" an entrenched fortress, with great powers of resistance. (3) Granted a revelation, granted some mystery inevitable; then, next, reason will have *no dogmatic form*, propounded on authority. But impossible to assert definitely any one belief without dogmatically denying its opposite; without limiting intellectual liberty in regard to it. "The real crime of dogma is that it treats as settled and certain that which unbelief would fain regard as doubtful or false." Prejudice against dogma the last stronghold of the enemy. If religion is to be practical, it must give truth in a form which will give strength for motive and resistance. If Christian truth had not been definite and dogmatic, it would not for eighteen centuries have satisfied the supreme necessities of the human soul.—*Condensed from Liddon, "Univ. Sermons,"* 1869, sermon vii.

Vers. 3-5. Topic: *The Victory of Christ over Thought;* or, *The Self-sufficiency of Christianity to fulfil its Mission.* Note, the *Gospel defined as "the knowledge of God";—knowledge*, clear, systematic, defined, adapted to the constitution, circumstances, destiny, of man. *Of God;* its author, subject, end. Note, further, *this Gospel is to bring men's thoughts into subjection to Jesus Christ*; to enthrone Christ in the soul of humanity. Note, also, the Gospel *recognises man as a thinker.*

Man's thought may be regarded in three aspects:—

I. **The distinguishing attribute of his nature.**—Therefore in seeking to purify and ennoble it, and through it to stir and rule the world, the Gospel is performing a noble function.

II. **The great parent of his character.**—Man is what his thoughts are: false, true, feeble, or vigorous, independent, progressive,—so the man. Nations obey, first Force, and then, as they advance, Thought. No durable prosperity where men's minds are dormant.

III. **The chief instrument of his influence.** — No influence man can wield is like this. Can only remove corrupt thought by free and loving thought. Christ set His thoughts circulating; is influencing by His thought every part of the world, every factor of the world's life. So, then, the noblest task of Christianity is to bring thought into subjection to Christ. How? Not by infringing upon freedom of thought or will. By (1) *Arousing thought into life and action.* The first action of Christ on the mind is to make men think; there are some who had no thoughts until they knew Him. By (2) *Removing obstacles.* Pulling down, "casting down," "bringing into captivity," *human depravity.* This depravity manifesting itself in (*a*) *Sensuous materialism;* the despotism of matter over mind. You cannot hope for, cannot touch, the sensuous man. (*b*) *False philosophy;* not this or that system, but the *spirit of all* wrong systems; proud, mystical, arrogant, forgetting or disdaining the necessary limitations of human mind. (*c*) *Religious superstition;* which is indolent; substitutes mechanical action for mental activity ("Don't think; leave thinking to the priest," etc.); encourages idleness;—in every religion. (*d*) *Secular authority.* (3) On the other hand: "*Our weapons,*" *etc.* "It is no secular principle that guides us. We lean on no material, visible power whatever, but the weapons we do use are 'mighty.' No matter what the stronghold may be called, its dimensions, its resources, its popularity, down it must go! Mighty to 'pull down.' We have only one thing to bear in mind, namely, to be on the side of Christ and truth and spirituality, and, whatever may become of *us,* our *cause* must rise and triumph. Have we confidence in *spiritual* weapons for the truth? . . . Shall policy, earthly considerations and schemes and measures, however well intended, be able to sustain the religion of Christ, or the truth that came down from heaven? Shall the Bible, or shall something else, be our guide through the voyage of life? Thanks be to God, I have no difficulty in . . . taking my side as the humblest of the humble in this war, and whatever fortifications may be erected against the truth a breach shall be made. The citadel shall be taken, and the people's thoughts be made captive to Christ."—*Caleb Morris,* "*Homilist,*" *Third Series,* vi. 216 (*condensed*).

Vers. 4, 5. *True Soldiership.*—The warlike instinct is in its usual embodiment no more justified by its persistence in human nature than is idolatry or falsehood. Yet there is lawful, urgent use for it. Not against his fellow-man, but, *e.g.,* against nature, to subject it to his use; against his physical propensities; against ignorance, crime, disease, poverty. Plenty to fight against, without fighting man! So then:—

I. **The weapons of true soldiership.**—First, they are "*not carnal*"; as opposed to (1) *Miraculous agency;* though employed at first, miracles are not the regular weapons with which Christianity fights her battles; (2) *All coercive instrumentality,* by the civil power, or other; (3) *All crafty inventions,* anything which, to exalt a man or forward a sect, accommodates Christianity to the sensuousness, prejudices, credulity, superstition, of mankind. Next, they are "*mighty.*" (1) They are *of God*—His productions. (2) They are His instruments. Unlike men and their books, God

goes with His ideas, and works *by* them. Mighty "not through the enactments of law, force of eloquence, cogency of reasoning; not through imposing rituals and thrilling music; not through human zeal, however fervid; not through human sacrifices, however costly; not through human efforts, however adapted and persevering; but *through God*."

II. **The victories of true soldiership.**—They are (1) *Mental.* A storm or a wild beast will more readily overcome the body than you will; unless you conquer the mind, you have not conquered the man. (2) *Corrective.* Pulling down the fortresses; "prejudices, worldly maxims, associations, passions, habits; behind which the mind entrenches itself against God." "Infidel thinkings, superstitions, selfish, dishonest, vain, sensual thinkings." Every anti-theistic feeling and passion. He who strikes at these root-evils of the world, pursues the best plan to conquer all the evils that afflict humanity. (3) *Christian.* "The forms of the universe come to man mirrored in his thoughts. The great God comes to him only in the reflections of his thoughts. The million forms of civilisation are thoughts embodied. Of thought man weaves his web of destiny, cultivates, his paradise, or kindles his hell; it is the millstone beneath which he shall sink, or the pinions on which he shall rise for ever. Now the work of a true soldier is to bring this fontal force into an entire subjection to Christ—to make all men like Christ; and then, what a world will this be!"—"*Homilist*," iv. 32 (*condensed*).

## *HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.*

Vers. 1, 2. *A Christian*—

I. **Must expect reproach.**—Can do very little—certainly very little extended work for God—in which will not occur many things capable of diverse estimate and representation, by opposite types of mind, by equally honest judgments, or by those whose acquaintance with the facts is, in varying degree, partial and incomplete. John the Baptist and Christ Himself could not please everybody (Matt. xi. 16-19), nor were understood by everybody. Must also take account of the world's distinct bias against the spiritual man; it always presumes the most unfavourable interpretation. No undue perturbation or astonishment, therefore, if the thing most simply intended, with the most direct aim at doing right, and that as in the sight of God and of Christ, is the very thing made matter of severest and (as we feel and know) "most unjust" animadversion.

II. **Must endure it meekly.**—Too easy for self-esteem—wounded, and not without cause of just complaint—to ruffle itself up, and becloud our judgment of our critics, and put us as utterly in the wrong as they, in our feelings towards them, or in our words about them, or in the method of our self-vindication.

III. **Yet may meet it with the courage of conscious integrity.**—There is time, and occasion, for bearing in silence, and going quietly forward, taking little heed. But there comes time, and necessity for the Gospel's sake, for simple, direct, bold avowal of what we know to be the truth of the case. (See further, under 1 Cor. iv. 3.)

Ver. 3. *Our Warfare; our Conditions, our Foes, our Weapons.*

I. **In the flesh.**—Weakness, ignorance, infirmity. Do not always do or say the wisest thing. "If only we knew better——"

II. **Against the flesh.**

III. **Not after the flesh.**—*E.g.* 1. Bodily austerities fail to subdue the evil heart. 2. Physical coercion, persecution to the death, are no right, or serviceable, methods of securing right opinion or right morals. 3. Human passions are no weapons for doing the work of our campaign against error or sin.

Ver. 3-5. A true application of this to **the war** whose purpose and whose issue is *the subdual of our own inner self and its life to the yoke of Christ.*

I. **We are part of the "world"** which is alienated from, and in revolt against, the mind and will of God. There is *a "world" within us*, as there is to be a "kingdom of God" within us; the Individual summarises, focusses as into a small, but very vivid, picture the "world," or "the kingdom," as seen on the larger scale in the Race. "Spirit" and "flesh" at ceaseless war within. [Gal. v. 17. Observe, not, "So that ye are not in fact able to," etc., but, "So that ye may not," etc.; each aiming to restrain the natural aim and action of the other.] The "world" within us is our first, hardest problem. We respond to Matt. xi. 28-30, and find "rest" from guilty fear and shame, and from any necessary (Rom. vii. 18, 19, 21, etc.) obedience to sinful impulse and habit (Rom. vii. 25). But only to find a new conflict arising, a new and deeper—deepening—appreciation of the presence and evil of sin cleaving to imagination, judgments, purposes, motives. Hate ourselves for the ignorance, pride, envy, jealousy, self-will, love of sin, indolence in service, inertness towards God and good, which we discover.

II. **Enemy strongly entrenched.**—Sin "native" to us. A usurper, indeed, with no right to possession. [Sin no designed or necessary accompaniment of humanity. Christ's sinless human life "condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. viii. 3). The foundation of all hope of our ultimate triumph in the struggle lies there,—"the Prince of this world"—of this little "world" within us—is "judged," and shall be "cast out" (John xvi. 11).] But it has made nearly every faculty and power—bodily or mental—a stronghold. [As, in the days of Stephen's weak rule, the barons covered England with their strong castles, each of which became a centre of revolt against authority, and of cruel, violent oppression.] Physical appetites—natural, neutral, necessary, *per se*—have become its seat. Imagination, memory, curiosity, joy in new conquests and acquirements, fear, love, anger (which has a rightful sphere and exercise), ambition (which in itself is a tribute to the nobility of human nature, and has saved the world from stagnation),—all have been fastened upon by sin; need reconquering for Christ. Yet, to measure hope by much of our past experience, or by our observation of others, is to say: "The complete conquest is hopeless! A *modus vivendi* is all we can expect. Must be content that in the hill-country of Canaan there will to the last remain many unsubdued enemies, of whom the most we can expect is that they submit to tribute, and are kept in fairly continuous subjection. No absolute conquest, or perfect peace, until death puts an end to our strife."

III. **Weapons divine.**—If it depended upon our watching, praying, effort, our fidelity as against ourselves, our untiring zeal in the warfare; then there would really be no hope of perfect victory; the inner battle-field will never thus be completely cleared of enemies. But remembering the Captain, under Whom we wage the war; the Spirit, our active Ally and Strength; remembering the Key to obtain all needed grace, which, in Faith and Prayer, is put into our hands; remembering the sanctifying power of the Truth (John xvii. 17); there is hope, there is certainty, of

IV. **Complete triumph for Christ.**—Everything intrinsically and of necessity evil, cast out, cast down; everything in itself natural, neutral, brought under the obedience of a new law—the new thing, "love to Christ," taking possession of, and regulating all the use and exercise of, every natural endowment, faculty, power, appetite; all that is compatible with loving God with "*all* the heart," used, cultivated, indulged, within the limits of His design and law, within the limits where His smile can rest upon us in their indul-

gence and use. Imagination purified, and turning away from old, evil objects, with a new repulsion; old links of association broken, and new and holier ones set up; all the necessary laws of human thought made to work in new associations and to serve new purposes. [In the parliament of the inner life of the natural man, the government in power belongs to the side of evil; though there is a small, impotent, protesting minority of votes in opposition (*e.g.* conscience will bear its witness for God from time to time). In conversion Christ comes into power. His "bills" get passed, sometimes in the face of a dogged opposition, and by a narrow majority of votes. When "*every thought is brought into the obedience of Christ*," the minority will have disappeared or been utterly silenced. All the votes then go for Christ, and for His will and purposes. He has captured the whole House by His love and by the spell of His cross, and "*leads all in His train*," an absolute Master of all.] [When Christ has captured the fort, He will put a garrison in it, to keep it for Himself. Similarly, and in very close analogy, as to **anxious thoughts**, see Phil. iv. 6, 7, made very clear in the R.V.]

Ver. 5. [*Special application to*] "*Wandering Thoughts.*"—Older sense of phrase was wider than ours; equivalent to "all thoughts which wandered from God," thus covering all the workings of the natural heart. Customary use to-day is rather for "all thoughts which wander from the point in hand." Really **the wandering of attention.** Can the attention be perfectly "*brought into the obedience of Christ*"?

I. **Analyse the process.**—[Great relief to some consciences to know that very largely, very frequently, "wandering thoughts" are not *per se* sinful, but are the consequence of *want of that mental discipline*, for which every student, on every subject, finds it necessary to struggle; the acquisition of the power of giving fixed attention, at will, for any length of time, being of the first necessity in all serious learning, and accounted by a student worth any price to obtain.] (Say) in **prayer.** In the morning, when going to ask for the coming day's help, we consider the circumstances likely to arise, the persons likely to be met with. The thought of no one of these comes alone, but linked with memories of former occasions, difficulties, deliverances, failures. An undisciplined attention finds every one of these memories the possible beginning of a train of thought which is followed, one thing suggesting another, until some sudden recollection shows the person who is bowed in prayer that, for he hardly knows how long, he has forgotten the matter he began with, and has reached a point at which he can hardly understand how he arrived. Pulls himself together and begins again; only to find every new request, every memory of past need or help, becoming "points" on a railway which "shunt" his mind on to a "siding," leaving him far away from his destination and his business. Or **in reading the Word, or listening to a preacher**; attention wanders. [Sometimes *the preacher's fault.* Does not know his business; viz. how to speak so as to win attention for his topic and his message. Very *often result of mere physical weariness*, which God perfectly understands, and does not condemn. Too weary—quite blamelessly—after a hard day, or a hard week, to give fixed attention to the reading or the sermon. Easy to test character of such "wandering" by seeing whether it also applies equally to some neutral or secular topic. Can attention, just then, be any better given to any other book, any other speaker? We may not altogether exclude the possibility of *direct spiritual, evil agency*, making suggestions, in order to distract and divert the attention.]

II. **Suggest the help.**—1. Do one's utmost to *acquire the power of giving attention* at will. If, *e.g.*, a book is worth reading at all, read it with

attention, master it; nor simply suffer the author to project so many images in succession upon the white sheet of our mind, which then pass away, leaving no more permanent trace than do the pictures of the lantern. So, listen with purpose to a speaker, watching oneself lest mere fortuitous suggestion carry us away with it. Every effort will help a habit; a habit worth all the pains, especially when on one's knees.

2. *Consider* before prayer *what is needed.* — Simply to "plump" down upon one's knees, without any special "wants," is to invite "wandering." An act of quiet recollection in entering upon public worship, will do much to fix thought.

3. *Pray to Christ.* — The idolater wants something visible, to help to make his God real. To the Father we may attribute no form; hard, therefore, for some undisciplined minds to realise that they address a Person; prayer seems sent out into the mere vacancy of space. To meet, blamelessly, the craving for a visible object is one (by-)purpose of an Incarnate God. He has a form which we shall one day see, and may now, lawfully, image forth. It gives some help to fix attention, to pray to Him as if looking at Him,—into His face. [Thus literally bringing thought into obedience "*to Christ.*"] [Such things as the position of the body, the place in the room, are not trivialities in this connection.]

4. So far as there is spiritual difficulty beneath the wandering, the remedy is in *a quickened interest in the topics* spoken of, read about, prayed for. What interests us holds attention. We do not "wander" when we care intensely about the matter of our prayer. Hence, again, whilst 1, 2, 3 may seem "*carnal weapons*,"—prudential, natural helps, —4 is distinctly a "spiritual" remedy. The heart wholly conquered and possessed by Christ will find—physical conditions being allowed for—no great difficulty with thoughts wandering from, or averse to, or rebelling against, spiritual things and themes.

Ver. 5. *This Subjection of Thought to Christ implies:—*

I. Forming all our plans as subject to His revision, or reversal, or supersession. [Cf. passing the plans of a new building through the surveyor's office. Or a subordinate, managing his department with constant reference to the known instructions and leading principles of the Head of the firm.] "Talking all over with" Christ, our Friend, Counsellor, Master; not because we ought, but also because we love to do so. Not chafing, or rebelling, if He substantially modify them, or set them aside for something better of His own.

II. Making His revealed mind in the New Testament the standard of judgment and appeal, in all estimates of persons and questions of wrong and right. Not testing them by the shifting standards of our age, or our "set," or the customary morality, or worldly expediency, which rules in current literature or business life. Bring conduct, persons, proposals in business, or the like, into His presence; look at them, speak of them, correspond about them, as under the eye, in the hearing, of Christ. "What would Christ think, say, do; or wish me to say, think, do?"

III. Taking any word of His as final and authoritative, in any question of revealed truth, or of Scripture history [or of Old Testament literary history]. Shall endeavour to appreciate with fullest justice what He says; but His word final; no "going behind" it. An unchallengeable *datum* of any problem into which it enters.

Ver. 7. "*I am Christ's.*"—This may be a word of—

**I. Simple, thankful, trustful dependence.**—An honour (as Paul feels it); a security (as the sheep feels under the care of the Shepherd),—"I am Thine ["therefore I pray Thee," or, "therefore Thou certainly wilt"] save me." Or it may be a word of—

II. **Narrow, exclusive** (though indirectly so) **self-estimation** (as with Paul's opponents).—No monopoly in Christ for any Church, or sect, or person that holds him at all. Cannot say: "The light of the sun, all of it, and only, shines through our one particular window." There are tests of His presence and work which ought to be fully recognised, outside our circle, in other patterns of Christian than that which we affect or exhibit.

Ver. 8. *Ministerial Authority, a Reality.*

I. Not to be "boasted of," or needlessly paraded; but may rightly and "without shame" or reproach be appealed to and brought into use. [British officers, unlike the Continental, do not always wear their uniform; yet always invested with their authority, and may use it.]

II. Always as a trust "from the Lord" of the Church. No inherent, indefectible dignity making the minister something beyond a mere man. But—

III. A trust for the "edification" of the Church. The minister has authority, that he may the more effectively keep, save, guide, the flock. To use it for "destruction,"—for any selfish ends, or to punish some personal *pique* or wrong,—a solemn breach of trust. "Have I built up a single soul? No? Then my ministry a failure, if no more."

Vers. 9-11. "'They say.' What do they say? Let them *say*." I will *act*. Said Aristotle: "If what my enemies say is false, I will live so as to prove it so; if true, I will listen and amend." Paul had nothing to learn from his enemies. But how few have not something!

Vers. 14-16. [*A True Missionary Policy* may be expanded and illustrated by timely facts in any particular society, from this.]

I. **There are always "regions beyond."**—Work to be done always lies neighbour to work accomplished. "The Church" is only a small clearing surrounded by bush, or forest, or waste, which wants taking in, reclaiming, fencing, cultivating, for Christ.

II. There must **always be in a healthy Church** *the "hope" of pushing* farther *back the border* of the clearing. "*Go out into* all the world." Pioneer work which breaks new ground; and quieter, less romantic work, which cultivates what would at once relapse into barrenness or waste if such work were remitted; are equally necessary and profitable. One undivided, indivisible work. But in a healthy Church there must always be the *passion* for the reclaiming of the "regions beyond." The Evangelical Revival which regenerated England sent forth, far and near, missionary agencies of every type, in the widest sense of "missionary."

III. **The established work is to be the basis of the pioneer work.**—A flying column may make a raid into a hostile land; but ordinarily the advance should keep in close touch with its base. A solitary Livingstone may plunge into darkest Africa, and be lost sight of whilst he is exploring and discovering what there is to do and to be won. But the permanent mission work of the Church wants the organised, established, liberal Churches at home. [Hold the ropes at top of cliff, whilst the rescue party go over to save life in peril.] The obligation, the privilege of the Corinths, the Philippis, the Thessalonicas, is to send forth, to send supplies after, the pioneer Pauls. The missionary on the borderland, or pioneering over the border, is merely the stay-at-home Church embodied. In the differentiation of organ and function in the Body, he is only the particular organ of the Whole which happens to be best suited to do a work which is the work, the responsibility, of All. The whole Body must keep itself healthy, if the Hand which reaches out to gather from the "regions beyond" is to be strong for its work. An unspiritual home Church will not long sustain healthy mission-work.

# CHAPTER XI.

## *CRITICAL NOTES.*

Ver. 1.—Small change of rendering, "*a bit of foolishness,*" because of small variation of reading. "For, on my own principle (x. 18), *it is* foolishness." To appreciate how "*foolish*" such talking about himself is, look at the (eight) occurrences of the word (or its cognates) here, and in Rom. ii. 20; Eph. v. 17; 1 Cor. xv. 36. "Yet *only a little bit* will I indulge in, and that because I love you." Choose between (indic.), "I will not say *would that*; ye do"; and (imper.), "*Would that . . .*; yea, I beg of you, do." No "*to God*" in Greek.

Ver. 2. **Godly.**—Lit. as margin; as 2 Cor. i. 12. [Cf. vii. 9, 10, 11 (but *not* Heb. xii. 28); also cf. Acts vii. 20.] **Espoused.**—Paul is the Friend of the Bridegroom (like the Baptist, John iii. 29. The Rabbis called Moses the "Friend" between Israel and God). The Church is to be the Virgin-wife by-and-by. We are here in the interval between the betrothal, which Paul has effected, and the actual bringing of the Bride to her Husband, when his office shall be perfected. ["Between . . . betrothal and . . . marriage . . . the bride-elect lived with her friends, and all communication between herself and her future husband was carried on through the medium of a friend deputed for the purpose, termed the 'friend of the bridegroom' (John iii. 29). She was now virtually regarded as the wife of her future husband. . . . Faithlessness was punishable with death." (Smith, *B. D.*, s.v. "Marriage."] Hence Paul's "*jealousy.*" He is responsible for bringing to the "*one man*" Christ an unspotted, "*virgin*" Church.

Ver. 3. The "*corrupters*" being the bride's "friends" (*ut supr.*) or other "suitors," viz. the rival teachers of Corinth. Same idea of rival aspirants to a damsel's hand and heart in Gal. iv. 17, "They are hot in their courting," etc. 1. Observe, he is not concerned lest himself, Paul, should be robbed of their love, but that the Husband, Christ, should be. 2. Observe, also, "*the purity*" (by a better reading) and "*unto Christ*" not "*in.*" The virgin simplicity and purity are to be kept inviolate *for* the sake of the love of the Husband. 3. Observe, the story of Eve and the serpent is (unquestionably) to Paul a real, historical event. Not quoted merely as a scholar might quote an apposite parallel from classical mythology in (say) Ovid or Virgil. That the Holy Spirit likewise sets His attestation upon it, also follows, to all who accept Paul as in these letters the organ of the "Spirit unto the Churches" (Rev. ii., iii.); Paul is here used by Him to trace in a sample instance the daily, ordinary workings of evil back to him whose first, and too successful, attempt has been the pattern and germ of all since. ["*Serpent*" only mentioned in Genesis; Wisdom (ii. 24) first makes the serpent the Devil; cf. Rev. xii. 9, xx. 2.]

Ver. 4. Observe, "Jesus," "Spirit" (not "spirit"), "Gospel." **Well.**—Ironically (as perhaps Mark vii. 9). Conybeare and Howson think, "bear with *me.*" Observe indicative. Also, no particular person meant.

Ver. 5. **Very chiefest.**—As in xii. 11. *Q.d.* "Therefore you should much rather bear with me, *for*," etc.

Ver. 6.—Very old question, *e.g.* between Jerome ("Yes") and Augustine ("No"), whether Paul seriously means this, or is only quoting his enemies. In any case the want of rhetorical grace was a voluntary abnegation [an "emptying of himself"] (1 Cor. ii. 1-5). [Cf. John Wesley: "I *could* even now write as floridly and rhetorically as the admired Dr. B——; but I dare not; because I seek the honour that cometh of God only. . . . I dare no more write in a *fine style* than wear a fine coat" (*Works*, vi. 186).] Observe the better reading. **Knowledge.**—The special "*gift*" (1 Cor. i. 5, xiii. 2, xii. 18).

Ver. 7. **Or.**—Turning to another topic. **Offence.**—Lit. "*Sin.*" **Freely.**—*I.e.* "*without charge.*" Cf. Phil. iv. 12.

Ver. 8. **Other Churches.**—*E.g.* Philippi (Phil. iv. 15). But, for another reason, not Thessalonica (2 Thess. iii. 8, 9). Beet suggests that he accepted the second Philippian contribution, which reached him in Thessalonica, expressly with the Grecian journey and its expenses in his view. **Robbed.**—Cf. Rom. ii. 22; Acts xix. 37. **Wages.**—A soldier's "*pay*," as Rom vi. 23.

Ver. 9. **Wanted.**—*I.e.* "*was in want.*" Graphic touch of incidental fact, as to his residence in Corinth. Did not (perhaps his work did not leave him time to) earn enough for his necessities! The man who at that moment was the most important factor in the world's progress. **Burdensome.**—See xii. 13, 14 (Separate Homily).

Ver. 10.—The very truthfulness of Christ Himself. Like, "I say the truth in Christ" (Rom. ix. 1). A man who is "*in Christ,*" who is a member of Christ's very body,—how shall anything but the true Christ who is in him find expression on his lips?

Ver. 11.—Some said, perversely: "Yes; it shows plainly that you do not care for us, as you do for the Philippians."

Ver. 12. **Occasion.**—General drift clear, particular application difficult, from our ignorance of facts. Hard to reconcile some of the presumed cavils and accusations; which have to be inferred from Paul's replies. But consistency in perversity is not to be looked for. [Cf. "We have piped; . . . we have mourned"; *q.d.* "Whatever we do, there is no pleasing you anyway."] Last clause plainly means: "That they and we may be made to stand on same footing, as to our worthiness and our rights." This, however, is ambiguous to us, for lack of the key of actual facts. **Found** does not mean "*found out*" in any sense of being "unmasked," but (as it were, judicially) "found" [cf. the "findings" of a court] in the opinion of others (Gal. ii. 17; 1 Cor. iv. 2, xv. 15; 2 Cor. v. 3 [?]).

Ver. 13.—Contrast with "*supereminent app.*" (ver. 5), "I say, They are no apostles at all! They say, I am 'catching you with guile.' Nay, they are workers full of guile [related word] in all they do." R.V. good.

Ver. 14.—The only Jewish parallel adduced is a solitary opinion of a Rabbi that the angel who wrestled with Jacob was a so-transformed evil spirit! Perhaps Job i. may have been in Paul's mind. Or a perfectly general assertion. **Light.**—Cf. Eph. v. 8; 1 Thess. v. 5; 1 John i. 5, etc. **No marvel.**—"If the Prince of Darkness can stride over the vast gulf which separates his real nature from the outward appearance of an angel of light, his agents can step over the narrower chasm which divides them from apostles of Christ. . . . Beings of darkness and beings of light are opposites, whereas human beings are capable of living and moving in either . . . darkness or light. They are flexible to either element, although they cannot belong to both at the same time. Satan, who is 'the ape of God,' counterfeits the Divine, and his strategy is a terrible caricature of the Almighty's ordinances." (Waite, in *Speaker's Commentary.*)

Ver. 15. **Ministers.**—Cf. of Paul, ver. 8. **End.**—Phil. iii. 19.

Ver. 16. **Again.**—After ver. 1. "You can very well let a foolish fellow like me be in the fashion, and do a bit of boasting."

Ver. 17. **After the Lord.**—Not to be compared with 1 Cor. vii. 10, 25. (See Critical Notes and Bible-class Note there.) Compare rather "After Rubens," "After Reynolds." Christ is the model. But no boaster ever was, in so doing, copying Christ; his conduct was no picture "after Christ." In ver. 10 he *is* speaking as conformable to, and partaking of, Christ's own truthfulness. But not the tone, or the mind, of Christ—this self-assertion and laudation.

Ver. 19. Bitterly ironical. "Your wisdom is rather set off as by a good foil, in these fools whom you clever Corinthians can patronisingly tolerate."

Ver. 20. Bitterly serious. **Bondage.**—"Lord it over you;" and more, as in Gal. ii. 4 (cf. v. 1); Acts xv. 10. **Taketh.**—See R.V. Or "*take*" as in a snare; such a case, *e.g.*, as 1 Cor. viii. 9. **Smiteth.**—As Paul, Acts xxiii. 2; **Christ,** John xviii. 22; 1 Kings xxii. 24; perhaps as a piece of, assumed, disciplinary power. [As an Irish peasant will bear castigation from his priest, or a low-caste Hindoo a blow from a Brahmin.]

Ver. 21. **As concerning.**—Same word as "*after*" (ver. 17). "I am speaking after the fashion, in the strain, of your customary '*reproach*' (disparagement) of me, as though I acknowledged as fact," etc. [Cf. Phil. iii. 4 *sqq.* for a more extended parallel. "*Counted loss;*" and yet how, on occasion, he can bring out, and use, and find useful, for his Master's service, his Roman citizenship, or his Jewish advantages. No "*gains*" to him, as a sinner needing acceptance, but great, and frequent, "*gains*" to the Gospel, of which he was the exponent and defender.]

Ver. 22. **Hebrews.**—With a little of the implied contrast to *Hellenist* Jews (Acts vi. 1, etc.). An old style, Conservative Jew [sprung from old style, Conservative Jews (Phil. iii. 5)], born in a Greek city indeed, but keeping up the stricter ways of an orthodox Jewish house, not like Hellenists, in practice and in thought assimilating to Gentile laxity, forgetting even their Hebrew, and using a Greek translation of the Word of God. **Israelites.**—Cf. John i. 45. "*So am I,*" in a double sense. **Seed of Abraham.**—Cf. Gal. iii. 29. "*So am I,*" with a new and better right also to the name, as well as that I inherited.

Ver. 23. **Fool.**—As R.V. Stronger word than (say) in ver. 16. Some (*e.g.* Beet) would press more exactly than others (*e.g.* Stanley), the word "*more.*" As if "*more* than these boasters." Observe, as to "*deaths*" [= many occasions, and forms, of imminent peril, when life was "worth no purchase" at all, "as good as a dead man"] there is no comparison expressed. Here he is *hors de concours;* he has no competitor, or is beyond even apparent competition.

Ver. 24.—Deut. xxv. 3. Thirteen on the breast, thirteen on the right shoulder, thirteen on the left. One omitted, lest the law should be transgressed by mistake and forty exceeded. Picture Paul bound, bent, to a pillar in the synagogue; reader standing by, during the flogging, reading Deut. xxviii. 58, 59, xxix. 8; Ps. lxxviii. 38. The officer wielding a four-tailed whip, two thongs of calf's skin, two of asses' skin. (Sometimes such a scourging was fatal.) *Five times* such a flogging!

Vers. 25-27. **Rods.**—Although a Roman citizen (Acts xvi. 22, xxii. 24). Remember we

are here only at the date of Acts xix., xx. All these sufferings lie between Acts ix. and xix. Up to this point, the only record of imprisonment is Acts xvi. 24; of beating with *rods* of *lictors*—the *Roman* scourging (*ib.*); of stoning, Acts xiv. 19; of perils from *Jews*, Acts ix. 23, 29, xiii. 50, xiv. 5, 19, xvii. 5, 13, xviii. 12; from *Gentiles* (= "*heathen*"), xvi. 20, xix. 23. May illustrate "*shipwreck*," "*night and a day* [lit. "a *night-day*," period of twenty-four hours] *in deep*," by Acts xxvii., which is later; "*perils from . . . countrymen*," by Acts xxiii. 20, 21, later also; "*rivers*," by the Calycadnus, not far from Tarsus, a sudden flood in which ("a spate," such as is common in all such short-coursed mountain streams) swept away Frederick Barbarossa; "*watchings*" (*i.e.* sleepless nights), by Acts xvi. 25, xx. 7, 11, and (better still) by xx. 31; 2 Thess. iii. 8. [Much of this well given in Stanley.]

Ver. 28.—Notice the change of reading; and also choose between (1) R.V. (or A.V.), and (2) R.V. margin. See how this daily interest, a burden, and *an inrushing care*, led him to incessant prayers for them (Rom. i. 9; Phil. i. 4; Col. i. 3; 1 Thess. i. 2). [How happy Paul, how happy the Philippians! In their case, every thought for them was a prayer, every thought of them a joy.]

Ver 31.—Grammar makes certain that the ejaculated benediction belongs to the Father. **He who is.**—The emphatic Greek recalls the Greek equivalent for **Jehovah**. Look at the *Divine* present tense in Rom. ix. 5, and in John i. 18, iii. 13, vi. 46, viii. 47, Rev i. 4, 8. **I lie not.**—Choose between (1) an asseveration in regard to what he intended (but in fact has only begun) further to relate of his life; and (2) "This purpose" (of boasting about "*weakness*") "is from a human point of view so unlikely, that in asserting it Paul appeals to Him Who alone *knows* his motives" (Beet).

Ver. 32. **Aretas** (*i.e.* Hareth).—Father-in-law of Herod Antipas; his capital Petra (in Edom). Antipas had put away Aretas' daughter; when Aretas cut off Herod's army, Jewish sympathy with Aretas made it a "judgment on him for executing John the Baptist." Help under Vitellius' command was sent from Rome to Herod. Just then Tiberius died; Caligula (perhaps) gave Damascus to Aretas, or in the frontier wars Aretas seized it whilst Vitellius was absent, occupied with the changes consequent on Tiberius' death. Thus the same occupation of Damascus by a pro-Jewish ruler, which favoured, or occasioned, Paul's persecuting mission to Damascus, gave help to his Jewish enemies when he returned (combine Gal. i. 17 with Acts ix. 22 *sqq.*) a Christian. **Governor.**—Lit. *ethnarch*, a mere provincial lieutenant. Farrar says that ethnarch was also a title of Jewish governors, permitted in heathen cities to exercise an authority over the Jewish community; *e.g.* such an official may have ordered one of Paul's Jewish "scourgings" at Damascus. No date for Paul's life can be very exactly fixed by all this (Tiberius died, A.D. 37). There are no *Roman* coins of Damascus belonging to this period.

Ver. 33. **Window.**—Overhanging the town wall. **Basket.**—Not same *word* as in Acts ix. 25, where it is that mentioned in the feeding of the four thousand. (Different word, again, for the "*basket*" of the five thousand.)

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 1—6.

*We have Paul the Paranymph* (the Friend of the Bridegroom).

I. **His work.**—To deliver, in her virgin purity and simplicity, the betrothed Church to her expectant Lord and Husband. [Cf. "*bring us to God*" (1 Pet. iii. 18).] 1. Marriage, closest of earthly unions, intended by its Great Ordainer to be a permanent, lifelong union, is the suggestive hint in the world of things natural of that closest spiritual union, between Christ and His people, which makes them a Unit, "**Christ**" (Gal. iii. 16; 1 Cor. xii. 12). That revealed, the key is given to the significance and sanctity of marriage. [So, in connection with counsels as to husbands and wives, Eph. v. 27, Paul says: "To present . . . to Himself a glorious Church,"—as His "Bride, the Lamb's Wife" (Rev. xxi. 9)—"not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, . . . without blemish." All the Old Testament figurative language about marriage, adultery, divorce, restoration, as regards God's people and their relation to Him, is not simply a happy use of a natural fact, but rests on this deep, original, designed fitness in marriage to exhibit the spiritual relations.] 2. What a day of joyous memory to the soul itself, and to the human instrument, is that when he stood by and saw the "love of espousals" (Jer. ii. 2), when the soul first got to know its Christ, to whom from that hour it was to be united;—the first tender love, so

sensitive to anything which would grieve Him; the simplicity of heart, judgment, purpose, desiring nothing but to think what He thought, and desire what He desired, and to please the new, and so dear, Friend in everything; nothing kept back, no *after*-thoughts, or *under*-thoughts, nothing but a simple, loving, pure opening-up of all the heart and life to the knowledge and guidance of Christ. Then the yet earlier memories of the incidents, the providences, the drawings of the Spirit, the half-understood going-out of the heart, the meeting with Paul or some other,—all leading up to the introduction and espousal. [How Lydia would remember "*the first day*" (Phil. i. 5).] One of the earthly anniversaries never to fade away into oblivion, but still to be kept most joyously even in eternity! 3. What a day of joyful, holy anticipation that, when for the first time I see, literally and "face to face" (1 Cor. xiii. 12), the Christ of Whom I have been hearing, thinking, speaking, so long; "Whom not having seen I have loved" (1 Pet. i. 8), and Who has loved me so much better than I have deserved, or could ever have expected. How joyous to Him, "satisfied" at last (Isa. liii. 11), to look into the face of His Bride, "resting in His love, rejoicing over her with joy" (Zeph. iii. 17); repaid at last for Gethsemane and Calvary; reaping at last the fruit of the age-long "purpose" of His Father's heart and His own (Rev. xiii. 8; Eph. iii. 11); tasting in full draught the cup of "the joy that was set before Him" (Heb. xii. 2), having now all He desired and died for. And how joyous to the Paranymph, glad to stand aside and see Bride and Bridegroom meet, she brought safely at last to her Husband's home, himself forgotten by them in their mutual joy. [So John Baptist, "This my joy is fulfilled."] His responsibility is then over; the "*care of the Churches*" will no longer press, even as a not ungrateful burden. "I present to Thee, Lord, a chaste, virgin Church." [In all this, "Church," "Church," practically means "Christian," "Christian." The Church and its history are only multiples of the Christian and his history. Or, conversely, the individual reproduces, in miniature but complete copy, the history of the whole.]

II. **His feelings: "jealousy," "fear."**—1. Jealousy often has in us an evil connotation and colouring. It is selfish. Pride is touched when the transferred love, won from us by another, tells that we are not first, or counted best. In God (or Christ) it is not "selfish," except with the "selfishness" of the king who cannot tolerate a rival king in his realm or on his throne. God may, must (as we may not), claim that all the heart shall, unshared, be His. Paul's jealousy has no selfish tinge. No great matter whether converts transfer their love for him to rival teachers or not, but a great matter whether these rival teachers come courting the Lord's betrothed One, and steal her love from Him; a great matter if they tamper with the simple, pure, direct love of her heart for Him. 2. The pain to a minister of Christ to see his converts "leave their first love," become worldly, return to, and guilefully plead for and defend, forms of sin which the healthier love of their betrothal condemned by instinct, because it grieved the Lord,—it is a great pain, not chiefly because his own work seems ending in failure, but because the Lord will be "so disappointed," and the unfaithful souls are preparing for themselves such eternal loss. 3. Very well to be tolerant, broad, towards other forms of teaching and other types, or Churches, of Christian workers; but there is no virtue in a toleration which can stand by and with silent equanimity see the beautiful promise of early, tender love to Christ spoiled, the simple conscience being sophisticated and entangled in worldly sophistries, the life being "brought again into bondage" to once forsaken sins. 4. Let the soul itself beware of the "*corrupting*" process (1 Cor. xv. 33). Lend no ear, Eve-like, to the arguments, suggestions, "more liberal" reasonings and practice of the world, or of a worldly Church; the old Serpent is in them all, at his old work, with his old "*craftiness.*" It is Eden and the Fall in perpetual repetition. The very

(necessary) contact with evil and evil men is corrupting, or at least perilous; even mental contact with evil in books is not without danger. The tender susceptibility of conscience is easily impaired; it "takes a fine edge," and loses it readily. Let a "*jealous*" guard be kept over the loyalty of the heart to Christ; let the first sign of a waning sense of His being supremely "dear," be noted, confessed, forgiven. Intercourse with Him, though He be unseen, must be frequent. Only thus can love to Him breathe or live in the corrupt atmosphere; only a vigorous inner life of consecration to Him can throw off the infection around, and live through it unharmed. The sense of duty to Him must be cultivated—"I am reserved for Him"; every disregard of Duty dulls the perception of Duty. Acts make habits of mind and heart [and body]. Every betrothed soul "that hath its hope set upon Him, purifieth itself," etc. (1 John iii. 3). [Cf. 1 John ii. 28; 2 Pet iii. 14.]

III. **His methods.**—1. He is a "*preacher.*" [1 Cor. i. 21 *not* to be used here.] 2. He preaches a *Jesus*, through Whom his hearers receive a *Spirit.* [In this case the personal Holy Ghost (1 Cor. ii. 12).] 3. His message is a *Gospel.* It is good news for an outcast world, that God sends His servants to say, "Come to the wedding," even as guests. Good news that to alienated man it is proclaimed that a [marriage] fellowship with God is again possible, resting on two great facts, resting upon the work of two Divine Persons. Outside us, and abiding here, whether men avail themselves of it or not, is the work of Christ,—the basis of all. Within us, and depending for its actuality and continuity upon our acceptance of it and co-operation with it, are the gift, the indwelling, the work, of the Spirit. No fellowship without the Spirit; no Spirit without Christ; no Gospel without a "*Jesus*" and a "*Holy Ghost.*" A "Gospel" which should ignore either Person, or His office and work, would be no Gospel at all. A "Gospel" which should undervalue or understate (say) the doctrine of the Holy Spirit—though, on the other hand, it should "*proclaim*" the "blood," the "cross," the "atonement" of Christ never so loudly and earnestly—would be an imperfect Gospel. There can be "*another Gospel*" [not "*another*," *i.e.* a companion, parallel, Gospel; it is a "*different*" Gospel, Gal. i. 6, 7, and here, as R.V.], "*another Jesus*," "*another Spirit.*" [This last in 1 Cor. ii. 12—in accordance with that parallelism of phrases and facts which in Scripture obtains between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness— seems almost to imply an action of the Evil One upon the soul, comparable to that of the Holy One upon it.] A "Gospel" which should minify or suppress an Atonement for guilt by a Sacrifice upon the Cross; which should deal with men as though there were no guilt, and no Sacrifice were needed; a "Gospel" whose appeal to men should assume that they can, if they will, rise out of and above their old and evil self, and by self-originated, self-sustained effort can improve some inherent, natural "goodness," and that they need no external, Divine help and grace; a "Gospel" which should propose to renovate the world, to regenerate the man, by sanitation, art, music, intellectual culture; such—true or false, as their exponents or opponents may deem them—are at all events "*different* Gospels" from that preached by, and successful in the hands of, Paul and the "Evangelical" preacher. They are proved such experimentally; for they do not bring about any "*betrothal*" of the soul to Christ. Not the phrase only, but the thing, is scouted by some of the human "Gospels of the age." There is some help in some of them; much help in a few; but they miss the deepest need of human hearts. They do not take into sufficient account [*e.g.* in denying a vicarious atonement] some instincts of human hearts which Paul's—Christ's—Gospel has been proved to meet. Only one Gospel, yet men scarcely tolerate it; many deceivers and false Gospels, and men "*bear them finely*"! There may be "*a different Christ.*" *E.g.* one something less than Divine as the Father is Divine; one who

is the Head, the Crown, the Flower, the mediating Origin of all creaturely existence, nearest the Creator, and yet all the great gulf between Creator and Creature between him and God. Or one who is only "*Jesus*," the very flower of the Race, the choicest exponent and embodiment of all that is most lovely and noble in Manhood, a human teacher, who spake indeed "as never man spake" save himself, but yet with a wisdom and knowledge only different in degree—not in kind—from that which "inspires" the highest type of human teachers. Or, still lower, an amiable, well-intentioned, philanthropic, enthusiastic soul, in full communion with nature, who could, and did, make mistakes in conduct and judgment; who could [and perhaps did] sin, at least in spirit and temper; who was hurried into unadvised, unintended courses by the force of circumstances, and played into the hands of enemies who compassed his death. [The growing prevalence of the use of "*Jesus*" instead of "*Christ*" is significant. It means (frequently, happily) a clearer, truer realisation of the historical side of the life and work of the Incarnate Redeemer, with the aid of a wealth of geographical, historical, literary, antiquarian knowledge which never was available until to-day, till we see and hear Jesus of Nazareth and His surroundings of persons and circumstances, almost as if we had lived amongst His contemporaries. A good thing, but needing to be watched, lest we see "*Jesus*" so clearly that we cannot see the "*Christ*." The very apostles needed not only that the Spirit should purify their eyes, and enable them to understand the true dignity of their Divine Friend, but also that the embarrassment and obscuration of close everyday intercourse with the man, should be removed by time and absence, and they be left free to see "their Lord and their God." The change of name often means also a "naturalism" of estimate and of representation of Christ and His work, whose tendency is so to overstate the "emptying" of Phil. ii. 7 that human limitations, and even liabilities, leave too little room for the Divine Son in the teaching and the work.] [The believing heart needs to watch against the "*corruption*" of the "*simplicity*" of adoring, worshipping belief in a Jesus, Who is Incarnate God as certainly as He was the (to-day more vividly known) Jesus of Nazareth. The closest intercourse between the soul and her Betrothed must be kept up. The "*Spirit*" must take that Godhead of her Lord which only He can really reveal (1 Cor. xii. 3), and which is a holy "secret" of love between the Lord and the soul (cf. Ps. xxv. 14); the soul's life must so rest upon a Divine Christ, that it can bear to know the historic Jesus better, without any peril of knowing the Divine, Redeeming, Incarnate Son of God less well. Hard to balance, to combine, both. But semi-naturalist "Lives of Christ" must not leave us with "*another Jesus*."] Paul in Phil. i. 18 is very "liberal," "broad," rejoicing that men who would not otherwise do so, are hearing of Christ, and this though the preachers—many of them his opponents the Judaisers—preach an aspect, exhibit a form, of the Gospel which was by no means his own, or that which he thought truest and best. Yet, with perfect consistency, he is very "narrow" and intolerant of another Gospel or another Christ (1 Cor. iii. 11; Gal. i. 6-9, v. 11, 12; and, in effect, here). The same supreme loyalty to Christ, the same ardent devotion to Him, rules in both cases, but is conditioned differently in its resulting expression.

IV. **His qualifications.**—1. "*Rude in speech.*" Some justification for this, though the phrase is the phrase of detraction and depreciation. The portrait drawn by an enemy must have some measure of resemblance. We know that he had deliberately refused to himself even the liberty to employ the aid of rhetoric to win attention and acceptance for his Master and his Message. Others, even his friend Apollos, might, blamelessly, use any rhetorical power, inborn or acquired, laying it under contribution for the service of Christ. Succeed or fail, he would not. [Too much must not be made of any supposed

discouragement over a "failure" at Athens, just before coming to Corinth. The address on Mars' Hill was not without its converts; nor was it specially ornate in form; it was, moreover, just coming to (very Evangelical) talk about Resurrection and Judgment, when it was suddenly broken off by the hearers' outburst of laughter. It was not that he had tried the rhetorical method at Athens, and had failed to make converts; it was rather the imperviousness of the intellectual mood to serious appeal, manifest in the majority of his Athenian audience, which made so emphatic his determination that at Corinth nothing should even seem to aim at flattering the "intellect" or tickling the "cultured" ear of the Corinthians.] [See further, under 1 Cor. ii. 13; and in Farrar, *St. Paul*, Appendix, Excursus I., II., III., are very full discussions and quotations of opinion, as to the style of Paul's writing (and so, probably, of his speaking also).] Ought we to call this "*rudeness*" rather a disqualification? No. He wished to make souls hear and love not his voice, but the voice of the Bridegroom. [Sometimes a preacher will preach so "well," that, like John Alden pleading for Miles Standish, the pleader, all unintentionally, wins the ear and heart for himself, and holds them back from the Lord for Whom He pleads. So the "execution" and voice of the singer will sometimes make the very song to be almost unheeded. Cf. Ezek. xxxiii. 32; the prophet's message went for nothing.] A successful winner of souls may, should, bring every natural or acquired ability into the service of his Master. But always with a most watchful jealousy over himself lest he himself should thus "*corrupt*" his hearers "*from the simplicity and purity*," and really do the work of the Tempter. Always with a completeness of consecration of all gifts to the supreme, sole, glory Christ; and this for some hearers, and with the personal liability of some preachers, may sometimes mean the disuse of some gifts, or their very sparing employment. The glory of success will then be manifestly due, not to the eloquence of the preacher, but to the power of God. [This all more fully under 1 Cor. *ut supr.*] The man who is willing to be nothing, that the Lord may be everything, is *qualified* for the work of bringing souls and Christ together. Provided that he be "*not rude in knowledge*"; for above all in the things of God, the man who is shallow and crude will only be a workman "*to be ashamed.*" No knowledge ever comes amiss to a preacher; like Sir Walter Scott, he will learn never to talk to any man without picking up something which he may turn to good account; he cannot know too well men and affairs and the world of nature or the arts, if only all his knowledge be laid before Christ as gifts upon the altar. But with or without this he *must* know "*the things of God.*" [The preacher who is well-read, well-informed, about everything except the very subjects which are the *materials* of his "business," makes a mistake. The Bible is the text-book of his spiritual Medicine; Theology is the Science of his Art of Healing; men are "cases" of heart-sickness, for his physicianly study and help. So far as study and hard work can do it, he should "qualify," "with honours" if he can, as a soul-physician. Poor talk to hear a preacher cry down "theology"; poor praise that he be better at everything than at soul-saving preaching.] No premium must be put upon coarseness or vulgarity of thought or expression; this is no *qualification* for a minister of Christ. But want of polish, or defective utterance, is consistent with real ability, deep knowledge, great success. Many of the least "gifted" are the very "*little children*" to whom is given entrance into, and foremost place in, the kingdom of God (Matt. xviii. 1-4). With what persuasive power do some, "little qualified," speak of the blessedness of fellowship with Christ into which they desire to bring other men. How they "*know Christ*," with a knowledge, an intimacy, only given to "disciples whom Jesus loves." Not only is their motto, "This one thing I do," but, "This one thing I know." They are not "*rude in*" the experienced "*knowledge*" of Divine things. Paul was not. It is

no *empty* boast in ver. 5. It is no *boast*, in any sense of self-assertion or exaltation. It is simple fact that, not only in comparison with the "*super-eminent*" (but "*false*," "sham") "*apostles*" at Corinth, but in competition with the true apostles of Christ, he has left his mark most deeply on the form of Christian revelation, or is only approached by John. More than any other, did he seem to "know" the mind and will of Christ. And, as always happens, there was a "native," prearranged fitness in the "vessel," to receive and convey the truth.

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 7—11.

[Dr. J. Lyth, *Homil. Treas.*, suggests:—]

I. **Honest robbery** (ver. 8).
II. **Honourable poverty** (ver. 9).
III. **Honourable independence** (vers. 7, 9, 10).

I. 1. The labourer is worthy of his "*wages*." [Opposite to "*gift*," Rom. vi. *ult.*] A true minister earns his stipend; though the happier, higher theory is that his people see that he wants for nothing, whilst, without interruption or care, he gives all his time and strength to the work of God. But there are always "unreasonable men" (2 Thess. iii. 2) with whom, whatever he does, whatever course he adopts, the minister always "*commits a sin*." If he take, or ask, for support, he is "*mercenary*" (xii. 17, 18). If he do not ask, or refuses, support, he "does not care for" his people, or for their love, and will not let them show it (ver. 11). Again and again he can only carry his case by appeal to a higher court: "*God knoweth*." Though, like Paul, he may now and then be compelled to speak out, to explain and defend himself and his conduct,—generally he does most wisely to see that his *character* is right before God, and to leave God to care for his *reputation* before men. Paul takes or refuses as may in any given case seem expedient. His is the true unchangeableness [like God's own]; not that he never varies from one line of action, but that he never varies from the unchanging principles of his conduct. 2. Hence it is quite honest to have accepted the gifts of the Philippians. It is part of the privilege of the ministerial office to live more directly than does any other man, not actually a recipient of charity, upon the love of human hearts. There can be no "business payment" for what the true minister of Christ has done for a convert, or for what he gives to his people in his continuous ministrations. It is no exchange of values, as in business payments or wages. The true minister, nevertheless, does give full value for all he receives. The people, on the other hand, of their free-will and grateful love "minister once and again to his necessity" (Phil. iv. 16). If a minister "will not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thess. iii. 10). But if he do his work, he may take "*wages*," that are no wages, but the gifts of love. 3. Especially may he receive what may support him as he strikes out (like Paul setting out for work in Achaia) into regions where his reception and maintenance are doubtful. To shame a people, so well able to fulfil their obligation to the man who has led them to Christ as were the Corinthians, Paul may call it a quasi-sacrilegious "*robbery*" of the Church treasury at Philippi. But the Philippians love to see, the Corinthians ought to see, that Paul wants for nothing.

II. **Honourable poverty.**—A man like Paul in want, in a city like Corinth! Yet of all men in the empire then receiving their "wages," this man—if only the "age" had known—was better worth his "salt," and his salt-money—his *salary*—than the emperor, or his soldiers, or the philosophers, or the artists. It is the old paradox of Providence. Tiberius on the throne, feasted to the weariness of satiety; the Son of God hungry in the wilderness! Truly "the

world is out of joint." The Maker of the world, the Ordainer of the fundamental laws of human society, "meant it not so." "I know how to . . . be abased; I know how to be . . . hungry . . . and to suffer need" (Phil. iv. 12). Not every man does. It is a grace. The "poverty" of the ministry may mar a man's character and impede his usefulness, if he allow it to occasion a perpetual anxiety, if it feed a continual bitterness against God and the Church, if he nurse a continual sense of "humiliation," at being "poor" amongst the prosperous men in his church, if he be frequently talking of the "sacrifice" he made to enter the Christian ministry. Paul had "learned the secret." It needs great grace "to be full"; but it needs great grace "to be hungry." The minister "can do all things"—even wear ministerial poverty "honourably"—"through Christ who strengtheneth him" (Phil. *ut supr.*). Yet the beauty and right of such liberality as that of the poor Macedonians, the expression of their sympathy and love, and a precious fruit of their faith, remains equally honourable; whilst the wealthy indifference of Corinth, which should have seen to it that the Apostle had no need to practise the lesson of wearing poverty with honour, remains utterly selfish and blamable.

III. **Honourable independence.**—1. "Honourable," because it better enabled Paul "*to do the Corinthians service*," and to silence the cavillers whose suggestions and cavils might impinge upon his character, and, through him representatively, upon that of the ministry generally. "*No man shall stop me of this boasting.*" "*So will I keep myself.*" 2. Such "independence" needs watching; needs perpetually bringing into review in the presence of Christ. It easily grows to be really a pride which will not take the gifts of those from whom real, or imaginary, slights may have been received. Very easily does sin creep in and make the boast of "independence" a piece of self-pleasing, and even of simple obstinacy of character. 3. "Independence" is only worth anything to a Christian minister so far as it means, or ministers to, a perfect freedom to speak the message of God in its fulness, without regard to men's pleasure or displeasure. If, for the glory of Christ and his freedom to be faithful, the minister seek or keep independence, it may be "honourable." It is then a just matter of "boasting," and may be worth keeping at any price. 4. If the "*truthfulness of Christ*," that perfect simplicity and directness of heart and judgment and will which were part of His perfect holiness, be in a man, it will dignify and sanctify his "independence" of character, opinion, circumstances. If a man's motives bear bringing under the scrutiny of the eye of "*God Who knoweth*," then though they be misjudged, as by somebody they certainly will be, or maliciously misrepresented, he may go on his way unmoved. It is often a good piece of holy strategy, by timely foregoing of rights—catching suggestion even from the very enemy—to destroy the very basis of operations, from which the assault of the unfriendly criticism or judgment is made. Only, once more, neither in the strategy, nor in the success of it, must Self find a foothold. All must be for the sake of Christ and to facilitate, or to remove hindrances to, His work.

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 12—15.

"*Like Master, like Servants.*"

I. **What sternness of denunciation!**—1. Quite alien to the spirit of our time, with its "breadth" of view, its "tolerance" of all shades of opinion and of almost all types of practice, and with its euphemistic condemnation when it does condemn. It means the intensity of conviction; the intolerance of loyalty to "*light*," and truth, and Christ; the necessary, inevitable detection and condemnation of falsehood and ignorance by "knowledge." [See "we know,"

four times, in 1 John v. 18-20. "We know . . . sinneth not" ("What dangerous spiritual presumption!" cries even the half-hearted Church); "We know . . . we are of God, . . . world lieth in the Wicked One" ("What wretched narrowness of judgment; how uncharitable!"); "We know . . . Son of God is come," etc. ("Yes," says the *agnostic* temper of all ages; "you theologians and metaphysicians are dreadfully *sure*; you '*know*' this, and that, and the other; we don't; we neither affirm nor deny"); "We know Him that is true" ("Impossible; God is unknowable; and His Son, if He have one, is unknowable too!") Nevertheless, John and the Church say, "We know." Christ and His people say, "We know" (John iii. 11, ix. 25).] Need to take care lest our milder words, and "more charitable" judgments, betray a less hearty allegiance to truth and holiness, an enfeebled appreciation of the questions at issue, and of their importance, or even a degree of cool indifference to the fundamental distinctions which underlie the sharply defined judgments of such words as Paul's. Yet—

II. **Any apparent change, any seeming approximation between good and evil, is only upon the surface; the real distinction beneath abides unalterable.**—[Remember the distinction between "*form*" and "*fashion*" (Trench, *Syn.*, § lxx.); very marked in Rom. xii. 1, 2; Phil. ii. 6-8. "*Fashion*" (the root of word used here; see R.V.) is (Bengel) "*habitus, cultus, vestitus, victus, gestus, sermones et actiones*"; what offers itself, upon the surface, to observation.] Satan cannot be "*transformed into*" [A.V., inaccurately]; he can only be "*fashioned like.*" The deep gulf, the necessary antagonism in their very nature, between "darkness" and "light," he can never pass, nor does he desire to. At the most, he can only assume some show of "light." His ministers can only "*be fashioned as* ministers of righteousness." The Christian conscience and heart must not allow moral distinctions to be obscured or confused; the instinct of holiness must be kept in full sensitiveness of touch and perception ["quick of scent," Isa. xi. 2 (literally)]. Such self-fashioning on the part of evil is a tribute to the beauty of "*light*," goodness, holiness. It acknowledges, too, that evil is no dress to wear openly, or in which to do "*Satan's*" work. Goodness never pretends to be Evil. The Tempter once dared shamelessly to ask Incarnate Purity to fall down—just for a moment—and worship him. Conversely, in the very fact that he must needs borrow the livery of the servants—angelic and human—of that Pure One, to do some at least of his evil work, he is ever bowing before Him, with a very real acknowledgment of supremacy. "Hypocrisy is the homage Vice pays to Virtue."

III. **No practical use in speculating as to what particular case of "transfashioning" on the part of Satan is in Paul's mind.**—The working of the principle of such a change, such an assuming of "goodness," is common enough, and clear. 1. Bad men, for selfish, or even malicious ends, put on the life, speak the language, do something of the work, of the good. Not many mere, and downright, hypocrites in the world. Far oftener the discrepancy between profession and fact, which, when discovered, is denounced as "hypocrisy," has been largely mixed with self-deception. Good and evil are sharply distinguishable in their salient, conspicuous examples. Like two neighbouring mountains [as *Guesses at Truth* suggests] which stand clearly apart so long as attention is only directed to their summits, but are hard to discriminate lower down, where their bases mingle in almost unapportionable stretches of nearly level ground; so on the ordinary level of common life, in the thousand questions of the minute ethics of daily conduct which are perpetually presenting themselves for solution, right and wrong are seldom so sharply divisible but that a man may sometimes find some real difficulty in keeping them apart, and in not transgressing across the boundary-line; whereupon the first step seems to lead on to, or even "to necessitate" another,

and that another; till the man is involved in a position which he never meant to reach, and, to the last, may try to persuade himself is not wholly untenable. He is not therefore blameless, or to be simply pitied, but he is hardly the *mere* hypocrite. Yet there is such a thing as the life which is the calculated, persistent, clever, devilish lie; the garb of righteousness is worn for evil ends, known from the first to be evil, distinctly proposed to himself by the "*deceitful worker*," and deliberately followed up to the last. Rare, but not unknown. So in morals, evil is disguised, made to speak fair, plausibly pleaded for, or excused until excuse passes over into defence; until young, inexperienced minds and hearts, without fixed principles, or any definite principles at all, begin to think the sterner judgments "narrow," "old-fashioned," "bigoted," "unfair"; and yield themselves to the blandishments of the "*angel of light.*" The poets, the novelists, the dramatists, the secular newspapers, greatly help the dangerous disguise of evil. How, for example, has Lust been glorified under the stolen name "*Love*"! The oft-sung praise of "Wine" has covered with "light" the mere, animal, filthy Drunkenness. Such talking and writing readily catches the public ear in every age. The same principle is at work in the details of individual life. A business opening; a marriage-proposal; a form of relaxation; essentially evil, but so proposed that social advantage, or profit, or pleasure, disguises the true character of the thing; and not until the soul has yielded and the "*deceitful work*" is done, does the disguise drop off, and the "*darkness*" stand revealed.

IV. **In the special application of the passage we note**: 1. "*False apostles*" are self-constituted, having no real "call" from God; their real and only commission is from Satan, who puts his own stamp upon them, so that they work upon his lines, copying his falsehood of claim, and of methods, and of purpose. They assume an unwarranted position, and have no real authority. 2. "*Such*," *i.e.* they, like these Corinthian examples, are selfish, ambitious of men's honour, malignant towards the real servants of God, tyrannical in their assumed authority (ver. 20), preach error (ver. 4), are full of party spirit. ["Then none was for a party, but all were for the State,"—for "*the* Church of Christ."] 3. Yet their "*end*" is a certain, swift, just detection and destruction. The "*world*," with all its evil, is even now so far God's world that the issue of its course and history must be a victory and a full vindication of goodness and truth and of God's Christ. The white robe *must* be stripped off from the falsehood sooner or later, and evil and evil men stand revealed in all their native "*darkness.*" The servants share with their Master "fire prepared for him." Every Church should keep jealous watch over the door *into* its ministry; and should keep in full working order a door *out of* the ministry. Every minister of Christ, every worker, of every order and degree, should [not be perpetually scrutinising, suspecting his neighbours, but, better, like the apostles at the Supper-table] be asking, "Lord, is it I?"

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 16—29, 30—32.

*Boasting Dogmatism.*

I. **See Paul descending to the level where his adversaries strut themselves** before their admirers, boasting of their credentials and super-apostolic authority; see him snatching up their own style of weapon, and on their own ground, with their own arms, vanquishing them. Then (vers. 30-32) see him flinging away the unaccustomed weapon of parade of his doings, sufferings, services, natural advantages, and taking up a "*boast*" in which none of them will care to follow him,—his "*infirmities.*" See how this "*glorying*" is, as it were, wrung out of him, with many a protest to them and to his own heart that it is "*folly*,"

and that he knows it is. Indeed, his own severest word is that such talk, such enumeration of one's titles to honour and respect, is "*not after the Lord*"; it is "*after the flesh.*" [There is peril in it, to a man himself. In that arena, where such boasting matches come off, there is an unseen Adversary, who may find many an unguarded weakness of the soul laid open to a shaft or a thrust, whilst the Christian champion displays himself. On the morning of Trafalgar Nelson's captains remonstrated respectfully with him against his determination on that day to put on his many orders—the tokens of his services and successes—fearing, as proved too true, that these would make him an inviting mark for the enemy's fire.] The very "gentleman" does not willingly do it; and how much less willingly does the Christian. What society stamps as against "good form," religion stamps as sin,—sin against the Norm and Pattern given in Christ. Social "Modesty" is, in fact, Humility severed from its Christian root-principle. [It lives for a while, as a cut flower may, in strength derived from its root in the time of their union. But only the abiding union with Christ will for any length of time keep either humility or its social analogue, modesty, a living feature of character. In fact, Paul's phrase finds its true, deep exposition in this:] The traits in a Christian character are the traits of Christ's character (to use of Him a word which properly belongs only to His human brethren) manifesting themselves in it. They are Christ expressing Himself in the men and women who are members of His Body. Their life, and so their words, are "in Christ." They should, normally, only speak as He can be conceived to have spoken. A very comprehensive test of—rule for—speech! All glorification of Self, all self-centering of thought and word, is "*after the flesh.*" The natural heart, unchanged, unrenewed "*after*" the Pattern of the New Manhood, speaks thus, and betrays its presence in such self-extolling phraseology. It is "*folly*" before God; He knows how baseless it all is. It is "*folly*" before man; men "*think*" the boaster "*a fool,*" and give him no real respect; not to say that every braggart, by his implied or openly claimed superiority, wounds the self-esteem of his hearers,—the one unpardonable offence to "*the flesh*"! And yet, the inconsequence of things in the world! The inconsistency of the natural man! Let a man only be confident enough in himself, let him only boast boldly enough, let him only parade his credentials long enough, and the very effrontery has a strange success. They call the man "*a fool*"; they call themselves "*fools*" [*to themselves*; for openly they claim to show "*wisdom*" in their very ability to estimate such a paragon of excellence; and sometimes in their hearts also they plume themselves on the "*wisdom*" with which they can see through all his "*boasting*"!]—for submitting to such a man. But they submit; they "*suffer fools finely*"! Men accept truth on three grounds,—intuition, or ratiocination, or authority. For most the readiest, commonest, and (to them) most rest-giving, is Authority. All learning begins in accepting, on the authority of the teacher, some necessary basal assertions. These may afterwards be verifiable by our cultivated judgment, or sustainable by our wider knowledge. But unless there be faith in the teacher's authority, learning is made impossible at the outset. Very many never get beyond this point. Let the Teacher only assert Authority long enough, loudly enough, he will find not a small *clientèle* who will become his faithful, ready disciples. It is made a reproach to Christians that they are "dogmatic"; in the same (not too accurate) sense, and with the same accidental associations attached to the word, so are many scientific teachers. It is true that, *e.g.*, Sacerdotalism does find that its readiest way to secure acceptance with a large class of minds in a solemn, repeated, emphatic assertion of its claims. It is equally true that persistent, emphatic, widely published, influentially supported assertion is the "reason" for much popular acceptance of non-Christian or even anti-Christian unbelief. There are as many disbelievers

on authority as there are believers on authority. There is great convincing power in such verbal "*blows on the face*" as, "Every qualified person thinks," etc., "Nobody with the slightest pretension to judge but believes," etc., "Professor This, Doctor That, assures us," etc. If religious teachers descend to the arena where such methods obtain of "*bringing into bondage*" an obedient following, they may not complain if their opponents by the same methods obtain their following too. But Paul's caustic remark remains true. Down beneath the loudest vaunt of "*wisdom*," of "culture," of "independence of thought," there lie a deep-seated ignorance and self-distrust, which are eager for certainty, and which are only waiting for some loud enough boaster of his authority to claim and to get their eagerly given, all-enduring, very faithful, enslaved obedience (ver. 20).

II. 1. **Hear Paul conning over his quarterings of nobility.**—For the Jew had been the nobleman amongst the Gentile commoners. [As Brahmin to low-caste or no-caste man, religiously, socially, and by birth, so (in his own esteem) had been the Jew to the Gentile.] Do his adversaries of the Jewish section in the Church boast of their pure blood, "*sons of Abraham*"? He can show that. Or, of their place in God's Israel? He has that. Old style, Conservative, Hebrew-speaking Jews—none of your Gentilising sort, loose in thought, too free in practice? So were he and his father before him ["a Hebrew" sprung "of Hebrews"]. If birth in a covenant people—himself wearing the seal of the covenant upon his very body from earliest infancy; if loyal pride in his people and their history; if godly, strict education in the Word and fear of God; could have availed a man anything before God or man;—Paul had them all. What Judaiser amongst them could show a fuller shield of arms than he—if a man is to found upon his quarterings of nobility? [Note how, in Phil. iii., he counted, and still counts, all these as "loss." When it comes to be a question of finding a ground of acceptance as a sinner before God, not one of these, nor all together, is of any value as a set-off against his guilt; they may as well, they must, be written off—"*loss*." He must find something else. He takes Christ, and relies wholly on Him. Yet (as in Critical Notes) as between him and men, especially for the Gospel's sake, he can fetch out and use—what for his own sake he values at nothing—these early points of national prestige. Schiller one day opened a drawer, and carelessly tossed out to a visitor standing by a patent of nobility. "'Von Schiller!' Did you know I was a nobleman?" said he laughingly. A University man may now and again remind contemptuous opponents that he is a scholar and a gentleman; whilst ordinarily he never invites attention or remark to the point, but quietly goes on with work amongst the poor, to whom he says nothing of his college and his degrees.]

2. In such points he is the equal of the best of them. In work for Christ, and in titles to be counted a fully credentialled apostle, "*a minister of Christ*," none of them is his equal. In sufferings for Christ he is alone; there is no competitor, no one to compare with him. Indeed, which of them *cares* to enter the lists here, and to compete for the honour of being accredited "*a minister of Christ*," if these be the marks of an apostle? (vers. 23-27). What an exposition of his own phrase, "our light affliction which is but for a moment"! (2 Cor. iv. 17). If this accumulation of sufferings be "light," what would "heavy" be! What a pre-eminence amongst the servants of Christ! To have given up what he had, and to bear all this, for the sake of a Master Whom he had barely seen—if there were "*folly*" in Paul, the world would so reckon this. [Yet (whether he wrote the Hebrews or not), he would have said, "Looking unto Jesus, . . . Who . . . endured the cross." In mere physical suffering, Christ suffered less than Paul, and was never in such perils. Yet how *unique* are His sufferings in the Word of God. They have a solitary, unshared, unapproached significance. We

feel that in studying the sufferings of Paul we are on our level, familiar ground. If in number and aggravation they are more, in kind they are the same, sufferings as other men feel. But we feel that Christ's are on another level, and of another order.]

3. Yet such a life—**this one life—has its uniqueness**, in another sense. Take Stanley's putting of the point: "It represents a life hitherto without precedent in the history of the world. Self-devotion at particular moments, if for some special national cause, had been often seen before; but a self-devotion, involving sacrifices like those here described, and extending through a period of at least fourteen years, and in behalf of no local or family interest, but for the interest of mankind at large, was, up to this time, a thing unknown. The motive of the Apostle may be explained in various ways, and the lives of missionaries and philanthropists may have equalled his in later times; but the facts here recorded remain the same. Paul did all this, and Paul was the first man who did it" (p. 562). Yet see how the very mention of all this is wrung out of the man; and with many a protest against his folly in letting himself down thus.

4. Where had Paul learned this? For "original" as such a life-lesson, a life-example, may be, *quâ* man and man, our mind goes back inquiring where he had caught his inspiration. He would have said in a moment, "To me to live is Christ." The scars and manifold physical traces upon him, which these perilous and painful experiences had left, are to him matters of laudable self-gratulation. They are the "*marks of the Lord Jesus*" upon him (Gal. vi. 17), the brand which his Master, Christ, has set upon the very body of his bondman, in token of His ownership. He almost parades them, on occasion, as a veteran may on occasion display his medal and its clasps. In quite as true a sense may we regard the **whole style of such a life**, its spirit, its purpose and aim,—the first so glorious an exhibition of a lifelong, often thankless and unthanked, self-devotion for the sake of others who had but scanty, or no, claim for it, as **a "mark of the Lord Jesus**." Christ has set His seal, His own likeness, upon such a man. [How much of all this is lost to history! Yet the Paul known by Christ knew all these; in Christ's "Life of Paul, My Apostle" not an item of all these would be omitted. "My times are in Thy" knowledge!]

5. And **yet another mark** of his Lord comes out: He is daily beset with the caring for the Churches. As is his Master, Whose words these verses, 28, 29, might well be. See what had just now come upon his sensitive spirit, in consequence of the visit of "them of Chloe's household" (1 Cor. i. 11). A letter which proposed sundry important questions of practical Christian ethics in which, not Corinth only, but all the Churches, in all the Christian centuries, were vitally interested,—questions which needed careful, complete reply; and still more disquieting verbal reports. These two letters catch and exhibit in permanent photography, all the acute distress of this sympathetic Paul, jealous for the honour of His Master and His Church, anxious about the souls who were his work in the Lord. Multiply such instances; add such cases as the Galatian Epistle may stand for, where his heart longs for friendship, and only finds a fickle affection which once burned hot and eager, but is now as eagerly transferring itself to others who made it their business to decry him and to undo his work (Gal. i. 6, iv. 12-20); an Epistle where he is seen to be above all distressed at hearing of the success of teaching which seemed to him to strike at the very heart of the Gospel, and at the honour of his Christ (*ib.* i. 7-9). Referee, arbitrator, organiser, pastor, financier (chap. viii.); "many coming and going," each with something that needed swift, decisive, just direction or advice; letters to be written, friends to be guided; his work on the spot to be kept going; often in poor health; always environed with, or liable to, such experiences as in

vers. 23-27; much to try patience; more to daunt heart; often much to wound love. No wonder that he speaks of the ceaseless inrush of such cares, with their incessant onset, almost as if every new-comer were an enemy bent upon destroying his peace. [Yet this man—as witness his letters, by their example enforcing his own precept (1 Thess. v. 16, 17, 18) in the first of them—is ever rejoicing. His is a bright life. These things do not obscure or quench the sunshine of the favour of his Master, ever poured into his heart. Grace makes him a victor in, and over, all. Nay, "more than a conqueror" (Rom. viii. 37).] No man need envy the man in the front, or at the head, of a Church; the focus of all envy, jealousy, grumbling; the first to hear, and to feel, if anything goes wrong. [Also let this human instance be a stepping-stone to a realisation how at every moment everything reaches the Lord of the Church Himself, enthroned above it, watching, watching over, its welfare. Every daily incident, the great crisis, the trivial detail,—they are alike flashed up to Him Who sits at the Centre of Government of the Universe, where all its wires of Intelligence converge at His throne, and whence all its lines of issued Command and despatched Force radiate. What must He know, must hear, see, feel! The unfaithfulness of a Church, the break-down of a member, the battle of the Truth for very life, reaches Him; may we say, hurts Him? Of necessity seeing, knowing, all; unable to exercise the (to us merciful) power of ignoring or forgetting,—the care of all His Churches coming upon Him!]

6. *And yet another mark of his Lord.*—A tender sympathy for all who are wronged. [Cf. Matthew's ("targumed") quotation in viii. 17 of Isa. liii. 4; "infirmities," "sicknesses" put instead of "griefs," "sorrows." As if Christ, Who Himself only knew death, not sickness, so entered into the suffering of the crowds thronging that night around Him for healing, that He felt their pain as if it had been His own.] (1) The "*weak*" are not always in the right, or deserving of unqualified sympathy and defence. Yet the minister of Christ will be ready to give the presumption in their favour, until their unworthiness be proved. He may not entertain an unreasoning, partisan sympathy with any one class [working-men, or any other]; yet if the "*weak*" have no other champion, they should find one in him. (2) Nothing should more quickly set his righteous indignation "*burning*" than that traps should be set, and stumbling-blocks placed, in the way of a brother in Christ, into which or over which, in ignorance or weakness he falls. (3) The man who cannot "*burn*" at wrong is strangely deficient in qualification for a minister of Christ. Slow to take fire [not "as the flint bears fire, Which being struck gives out a hasty spark And then grows cold again:" Brutus (of himself), Shakespeare, *Julius Cæsar*], but burning with sustained intensity of enkindled principle. [See how sternly Christ could feel and speak of the "*offender*" of even "*a little one*" (Matt. xviii. 6).] (4) Every single soul of his flock will be so dear to a true shepherd that no greater wrong can be done to him and no greater pain given, that nothing more surely will arouse a holy indignation in him, than that its weakness or ignorance or inexperience should be taken advantage of, *e.g.*, by a malicious worldling, or (worse) by an older, wiser, but fallen-hearted fellow-Christian. [Or even that an older Christian, by sheer, self-pleasing laxity should ruin a soul not yet established (Heb. xii. 13).]

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 30—32.

*An Unwelcome Memory of the Past.*

Perhaps this is only the first item in an intended recital of dangerous and humiliating experiences, from which—the whole topic of himself and his doings being distasteful—he turns aside when thus has only begun to touch it.

"*Damascus!*" 1. What a name to him! There are days and places known and famous in heaven, but according to a scale of interest and importance very different from that which regulates the notice given to days, and persons, and places, in the news of the day or the history of the century. [The sites and dates of, *e.g.*, "Decisive Battles of History," are known there, or are little regarded, according as they bear upon the fate and progress of the kingdom of Christ. That little company travelling to Damascus with Saul; that same Saul in darkness, bewilderment, prayerful repentance; all the struggle in his heart;—these were watched in heaven, as no royal pageant, or even dynastic struggle, nor perhaps, a famous fight or political contest, would be.] There are days and places which even in the eternal retrospect will stand out, never fading into oblivion, even when the most permanent landmarks of earthly history are grown dim, or have disappeared. The soul will never forget where, when, how, it first met Christ. In heaven *the* interest of the city Damascus is now, and eternally will be, this,—Saul of Tarsus there first bowed the knee to Jesus of Nazareth. 2. Paul never forgot it. Yet another memory is associated with it,—that of his extreme peril and his escape by the wall. Confessedly a little difficult to see why this was so distasteful a memory to him; why this in particular should be accounted one of his "*infirmities.*" Perhaps the key to his feeling was some detail, some matter of vivid reminiscence, which was clearly present to his own mind as he dictated the sentences to his amanuensis, yet which he forgot to mention, and the omission of which may have been as perplexing to the Corinthians as to us. It was certainly his first taste of the deadly opposition which he was to meet with from his own countrymen and co-religionists, now that he had become a Nazarene. It may be allowable to fill out the brief narrative of Acts ix. 20-22 and to conceive of him returning from "Arabia" full of new convictions and knowledge and experience—full of his new Lord—and pleading with the Damascene Jews with an earnestness as full of hope of success as it was full of zeal. [As "young Philip Melancthon" expected that his testimony and his arguments would win "Old Adam" in other men for Christ, right away.] And then to see him in the reaction of comparative "failure"—for to confound men in argument, as he did abundantly, is only one-half of "success"; to see him obliged to go into hiding and to skulk about, until he could one night be dropped stealthily over the wall and fly. "After all, then, Rabban Saul is one thing, and Saul the Nazarene is another. Saul the Nazarene is '*weak*' like other men; even he is not going to take a world by storm for his new Christ." The first check to new zeal, the first disappointment and rebuff to the hope of soon bringing others to Christ; to win victories in argument, and then to find that the beaten foe can do mischief, and one must beat hasty retreat;—such are in one's native "*weakness*" humiliating lessons to a proud, fervid spirit, a hard breaking-in for some temperaments; perhaps for his. [Especially if we know that our Damascene enemies are triumphing over the flight of the Nazarene champion; and that for years we shall hear the story told again and again, to our scornful disadvantage.] Perhaps his own feeling, more than appears on the surface of the letter here, or some mocking reference to it [if it became a sort of stock story of his opponents, to be told mirthfully to his prejudice] at Corinth, made the very mental recurrence to it, and much more this direct reference to it in writing, a painful thing. 3. Yet Paul will snatch the incident from the very mocking adversary, or from the rebelliously proud heart within him, which does not like even a reference to this. If it be a cross to self, the better, then, to crucify self upon! If his enemies taunt him with the "glorious retreat" he made from Damascus, he will make a "glory" of it. It was a shame put upon him, just because he had become Christ's. And

for that reason only does he refer to it. 4. And he makes oath and says, "Thus and thus did I escape." There was going to be a sworn list of painful, humiliating reminders that he was only "*weakness*" before God. But he breaks off; the first incident stands alone; too small a finish for the solemn exordium. A good man speaks truth: (*a*) Always: "*I lie not*," neither habitually, nor in this special instance; (*b*) As standing before a listening Judge. Israel's God "shall know." Every light—every more solemnly serious—word is spoken as in the presence of God. To him the very thought of that God is, in fact, in theology, in habitual memory, bound up with the most loving expression of His true Self,—He is "*the God of*" His "*Lord Jesus Christ.*" His name is "*Father.*" Yet is He a God of truth, Who neither speaks nor tolerates falsehood. To Him lying is awfully great in its sinfulness; it is mean, detestable, mischievous. He searches hearts; He hates falsehood; He will assuredly visit it. The character of the preacher of the Gospel is bound up with the character of the Gospel itself. If the preacher be only a lying braggart, how shall anything he preaches claim acceptance? (*c*) He can then, when fitting, call God to witness. But Paul passes off; something shunts him on to another line, a "thorn in the flesh," concerning which the truth of all he says is only too notoriously and (to himself) painfully obvious. [The apologetic value of all such very human turns of thought in these letters is very great. These letters are valueless as bases of Christian Faith unless they be genuine and authentic. In just such traits as these does every competent student discover the indubitable marks of a document of unassailable historical character and value.]

## *SEPARATE HOMILY.*

Ver. 30. We have more than a revelation of Paul's personal character here; we also have a revelation of Divine power, bestowed through Christ, acting upon, elevating, that character. His rebuke is chastened; his boasting is mingled with modesty; both show the guiding influence of the Spirit of Christ. Further, (1) he has been permitted to suffer, (2) he has thus learnt to sympathise. These are his credentials. So also "as One who suffers and . . . who can sympathise . . . our Lord is best known to us."

I. **As One who suffers.**—The heart-broken—where not heart-dead—world needs for its Leader One acquainted with grief. "To the Cross, to Gethsemane, to the sacred Face wet with tears and furrowed with agony, the soul turns in its hours of darkness, and never in vain."

II. **In that suffering it sees sympathy.**—Not merely suffering *for* us, but *with* us. The gracious purpose of the Incarnation. "The Incarnation is that touch of God which makes the whole world kin." "The gods of classic heathendom knew nothing of sympathy with the wants and woes of man; they stood aloof in sublime indifference; had they possessed some touch of humanity, they might have gained a hold over the affections of the people, which they never possessed. It was left for the Gospel to reveal to us a God who could love with so mighty and yearning a love that it brought Him down . . . that He might be . . . of us. It is in this revelation that the Gospel has conquered. Such are the marks of the Lord Jesus; suffering and sympathy. It is of these [?] St. Paul boasts." Borne as they were in the spirit of his Master, these sufferings had not made him morose or hard. They had nourished a tender, thoughtful care for the sufferings of others, and even for their weaknesses also. "Had so entered into the mind of Christ that he could be tempted in all points even as his brethren were. Could make himself one with the over-scrupulous man, in a matter which to his own spiritual

robustness was not of the slightest importance. Could so enter into this man's weakness that in sympathy with him he was weak also, feeling the grievance almost as if it were his own. Could feel another man's temptation, and battle with it, as if it attacked him personally. His rivals led men with glib tongues, ready manner, flattering speech; Paul by acts of sympathy, not words. If you are called to suffer for Christ's sake, remember that the Hand which is laid upon you to sustain you is a *Hand* that has been itself *pierced.* Suffering and Sympathy! Such are the Arms of the Cross. On these the Son of Man is stretched out. In these arms He would embrace a fallen humanity."—*From Canon Hutton, "Clerical World,"* i. 353.

## *HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.*

Ver. 2. *Espoused to Christ.*

**I. Your privilege**;—implies believing union with Christ; special duties and enjoyments; entire consecration as to one husband.

II. **Your espousals** effected by the grace of God; through the ministry of the Word.

III. **Your obligations**, to preserve your purity; that we may present you to Christ; for this we are jealous over you.—[*J. L.*]

[Cautiously, use may be made of the experiences or memories of the days of "engagement," to make vivid the nature and effects of the love for our absent, but real, Friend. Is there no "engagement ring," and no "marriage ring," between Christ and His soul-bride? A first pledge of love and a second given in the beginnings of their closer acquaintance and mutual affection; to be far outdone by another love-token which shall be given when first the Bride steps with Him over the threshold into the heaven which is eternally to be their Home together. How love works:—There is the frequent interchange of messages by letter whilst apart. Each lives in the constant thought of the other; each is prompted to be thinking for, contriving little pleasures for, the other, even in absence. Each is trying to be, and to do, what the other would like. Also ask: "Soul, has thy Lord had to give His Betrothed One a bill of divorcement, for any unfaithfulness to Him?"]

Ver. 2. The work of the Ministry needs for its completeness—

**I. Winning souls for Christ.**—Yet some men, some Churches, do not follow this up by—

II. **Keeping and preparing them for Christ.**—[As Esther under the care of Hegai, was being got ready for the day of her actual marriage to the King.] By thorough training, educating, in holiness. Watching over them, watching against men, or habits, or books, which would "*corrupt.*" Never will minister say, or Church, "It is finished," until—

III. They are **presented**, none missing, all pure, to Christ. [Concerning some converts, many a minister says: "I am almost thankful to hear they are gone to heaven. I never felt safe about them until now."]

Ver. 3. (*Put on the Blackboard for an Address:* S[atan]. S[ubtlety]. S[implicity.])

**I. An adversary.**—Count on him as against you; against all your best interests; against all that is best in your character; against all which makes Christ look with complacency on His Bride that is to be. Practically believe in a devil. A fool's Paradise for you if you don't. He comes even into a real Paradise. No place is sacred to him; no state of life, no work, no pleasure. Christian soldier is never doing a "sham fight." Never can afford to "stand at ease."

**II. Favourite weapon and method.**

—Not often open attack; but bush-fighting warfare. Secret aim; deadly shots before we know danger near. "*Resist the Devil?*" Yes, when he gives the chance. But often has done us mischief before we knew of the danger. Hidden behind a plausible suggestion of excuse for doing less for Christ, or behind a plea for breadth; lurking in some natural affection; hidden in the sensuous fiction, which "everybody is reading." "*Having done all*" (Eph. vi. 13),—when the open attack has been foiled, the seen danger escaped, the obvious sin refused, —when the battle seems over and the enemy has drawn off, and you, weary, want to rest from the strain of incessant watching,—"*stand!*" Just then have a care of the subtlety. You have passed safely through the temptation of illness? Take care of the subtle temptations of recovery. Have outlived unpopularity or persecution? Take heed of the subtle temptations of popularity and honour! etc., etc.

III. **Your defence,** and so his point of attack, will be your **simplicity.** (See Homiletic Analysis.) "Singleness of purpose, integrity, generosity, impartiality; that openness and sincerity of heart which repudiates duplicity in thought or action. No idea of simplicity in the ordinary use of the word, except . . . simple concerning evil, simple in respect of any attachment which might seduce them from the singleness of devotion, the undivided homage and affection due to Christ." (Rev. W. Webster, M.A.) A wonderful Ithuriel-spear-like touch has such a simplicity of thought and heart, in detecting sin in practice or proposal, and even such error in doctrine as would affect the glory or work of Christ. The little child has an instinct which unmasks the subtle Tempter. Let there be no touching or looking at the "apple," lest the heart be drawn aside. In the face of Temptation you are undone if you reason; the swift, simple instinct will guide and save. Subtlety against subtlety,—you will be no match for Satan. Simplicity against subtlety,—you will conquer. Let the oldest Christian, with all the increase of knowledge and experience which years bring, keep the first tenderness of the little child stage; when the new-born love feared to do, or say, anything that would grieve Christ,—in friendships, business, pleasures, books.

Ver. 15. "*According to their works.*" —God's penalties are inflicted. [In many forms directly and *ab extra.* Else what is "forgiveness"? The indirect and providential—"natural"—penalties of sin are often only very slowly, and very incompletely, reversed or negatived, even to a pardoned, happy, holy child of God. These are taken up into the sanctified disciplinary life of the pardoned man.] Yet never merely arbitrary in their connection with the sin, but *congruous.*

I. "**In kind.**"—This most nearly Paul's point here. Fruit corresponding to seed sown; prepared for, and growing out of, seed sown.

II. "**In measure**": God never will overdo the penalty. No one indiscriminate punishment of sin; as no indiscriminate, undistinguishing reward of righteousness; there are degrees of suffering, as of heavenly joy, though in all cases of equal, eternal duration. ["Many stripes, few stripes."] May vary from something scarcely more than privation of His favour and presence, up to the most intense suffering of which mind and body in eternity capable. [Doctrine of *rewards* and penalties must be studied as one indivisible, homogeneous subject with strictly parallel branches, the principles in each strictly analogous to those in the other.]

Ver. 19. *A Common Sequence.*

I. "**Wisdom,**" pluming itself that it is so wise.

II. **Self-conceit,** which leaves the door open for—

III. **Humiliating slavery** to egregiously foolish touching, to obviously

shallow, but very confident, loud-asserting, leaders of opinion or practice. For self-gratification how much will men endure; for, and from, Christ, how little.

Vers. 21—31.
I. **What sufferings.**
II. **What devotion.**
III. **What faith.**

IV. **What triumph.**—[*J. L.*]

[Notice how he puts a godly ancestry and a place amongst the covenant people of God, in the very forefront. It may be an occasion of everlasting thanksgiving to a man. Or, like a noble name inherited by an unworthy scion of a great house, a shame now, and a source of everlasting shame.]

## CHAPTER XII.

### *CRITICAL NOTES.*

(*No break, except that of a new paragraph.*)

Ver. 1.—Note *reading*; probably, as in R.V. Remember how full is Paul's sense of "*expedient*" (1 Cor. vi. 12, x. 23, viii. 10, here); deep *moral* inexpediency is here involved. "*Glory*" here (almost) = "brag." **Visions, revelations.**—"*Various kinds* of visions, and (to use a wider word) revelations *in any mode*, imparted *by* Christ" (Beet); who also compares as "interesting parallels," Acts xxvi. 19, Gal. i. 16, visions vouchsafed to Paul that he might make, or upon which he made, a quasi-revelation to men. But query? Whole section (vers. 1-10) moves in a world of supersensuous things, where knowledge is scanty [even Paul's own (ver. 2), and how much more, then, ours]; and where much precision of interpretation is unattainable [as, in "*doth not yet appear*," etc., 1 John iii. 2, it is not altogether, or in any great degree, an intentional concealment or withholding, that creates the mystery. Rather the impossibility of telling us more of what has nothing in our experience or in the analogies of earth to help us, even to knowledge "in part"]. Choose between (1) revelations of which Christ is the subject, and (2) revelations of which Christ is the Giver.

Ver. 2.—Note "**know**" (accurately), more clearly connecting the (intentionally) oblique reference with himself. *I.e.* "I know the man at the time, and how he was . . .; and I still know the man who was then," etc. **Third heaven.**—Talmudic references to *seven* [not always consistently enumerated] heavens are common. Quite uncertain [since "Talmud" *unwritten* until after this] whether this opinion is as old as, or older than, Paul's day. There is also found a simpler Rabbinic view based on Deut. x. 14, making *three* spheres: (1) "heaven," *i.e.* that of birds and clouds; (2) "heaven of heavens," *i.e.* the clear sky beyond; (3) the invisible world beyond. [Aërial, astral, angelic.] Also it may be a question whether Paul makes "Paradise" a *fourth* sphere, or only the same as the "third heaven." Perhaps something behind the distinction of prepositions (equivalent to) "*up to*," "*into*." ["Questions of words, to no profit, but to the subverting of (at best the attention of) the hearers" (2 Tim. ii. 14).] *Only certain* Scriptural *facts* are: (1) that "*heaven*" is often "*heavens*," as if a complex conception (*e.g.* in Lord's Prayer, Matt. vi. 9, 10; Eph. iv. 10); (2) *Paradise*; most definite indication being that to dying thief, Luke xxiii. 43 (only use of word by Christ, and that rather as an adoption of the man's standpoint); also found in Rev. ii. 7, which probably (remembering how the symbolism of the Revelation is saturated with Old Testament histories and imagery) links the future world of happiness with the lost (ideal) world of unfallen man in Eden. "The present abode of the faithful dead" (Beet).

Ver. 4.—"*Unutterable utterances*" imitates Paul's Greek phrase. "Words, and no words" (Stanley). "Expression taken from the secrecy of the Greek mysteries" (*ib.*); but this, taken with the former phrase of Stanley, *combines* (1) impossible to utter, and (2) not allowable to utter. Usually, a choice made between (1) and (2). He adds: "*Man* cannot speak them; God *may*."

Ver. 5.—Waite (in *Speaker*) makes "*such a one*" (ver. 2) and "*such a one*" (ver. 5) not reiterative, but cumulative. "I knew a man caught up to third heaven. . . . Further, I knew a man, so caught up, also caught up into Paradise; and further, hearing there. . . . Of a man so caught up, and indeed, so caught up into Paradise, and there, moreover, hearing.

. . . I will glory." "On behalf of one, who in all this was entirely passive and recipient, without exertion or merit of his own, he will boast, but not on behalf of his personal self, his own will, work, and service, except with regard to his infirmities."

Ver. 6.—Oblique reference to the Corinthian "boasters." *Q.d.* "If I were disposed to enter into a boasting-match with your braggarts, I should win; at least (unlike them) I should only need to speak *facts* about such a man as that" (cf. x. 7, xi. 21 *sqq.*; Phil. iii. 4-6). **Of me.**—As R.V.; not "*about* me," but "*from me*" ("*his letters, say they*," etc., x. 10).

Ver. 7. **Exceeding greatness** (R.V.).—Cf. cognate words (and thoughts) in iii. 10, iv. 17, ix. 14; Eph. i. 19, ii. 7, iii. 19, iv. 7; also xi. 23, i. 8; Gal. i. 13 (also 1 Cor. xii. 31; Rom. vii. 13). Note also, the broken grammar (as in R.V.), as if the rush of feelings and memories confused utterance. **Thorn.**—See Separate Note (3). Lit. "'Thorn' *for* the flesh."

Ver. 8.—As "*the Lord*" had Himself done in Gethsemane. [*I.e.* taking this as a thrice repeated request, on some one occasion. Farrar (and others) would make three separate occasions of recurrence (perhaps of "special revelations" and) of the physical visitation, and three occasions of prayer. This depends, in part, on (precarious) deductions as to the chronology of Paul's life.] **Besought.**—Lit. "*entreated*"; vivid sense of personal communication with Christ. Clear case of *prayer to Christ*. Good illustration of meaning of *Paraclete* (same root); he *called to his aid* Christ and His help.

Ver. 9. **Said.**—"*Hath said*" (R.V.). As if the assuring word were ever freshly being spoken; true when first given, and abidingly true; a standing law of Paul's continuous life. **Sufficient.**—Cf. cognate word, ix. 8 [also (for thought) cf. Phil. iv. 10-19]. "Don't press thy request; sufficient for thee that thou hast My grace." **Made perfect.**—"Has its full development" (Conybeare and Howson); *q.d.* comes to its full-grown, adult strength. Keep "*weakness*" and "*weaknesses*" (for "*infirmities*"). Observe "*My*" (in "*My strength*") is doubtful; the omission makes the passage a perfectly general truth (so Stanley. But is this so generally true? Is it not true simply when spoken of Divine strength relatively to human weakness?). **Rather.**—Rather boast than complain (Stanley); rather boast than seek to have removed (Beet, Waite). **That.**—"A purpose which in his boasting Paul cherishes, and which is to some extent attained by his boasting" (Beet). [Rather too forced, too close, a connection? Query, more loosely, "I will not (I say) ask for their removal; that would rob me of a great honour, and blessing, and joy; I will keep them, if thus the power," etc. **Rest.**—Lit. "*tabernacle.*" "To come to a place for the purpose of fixing one's tent there" (Conybeare and Howson). Cf. Exod. xl. 34, 35 (where both "*upon*" and "*in*" are found conjoined (as in Acts ii. 3, 4, "upon," "filled with"); John i. 14; Rev. vii. 15, xii. 12, xiii. 6, xxi. 3 [John ii. 21 (*see also* 11); 2 Pet. i. 13, 14 (also Matt. xvii. 4, and parallels]). [Cf. iv. 7.]

Ver. 10.—"Four outward circumstances in which Paul often felt his weakness. . . . Acts of purposeless cruelty, repeated lack of the most needful things, the repeated pursuit of enemies, positions in which there seemed no way of escape." (Beet.) "*For Christ's sake*" belongs to *each of the four*.

Ver. 11.—Verdict, self-pronounced: "How foolish I am to boast." Yet "with extenuating circumstances." "It was *your* doing, not *mine* (you ought to have saved me the task of commending myself)" (Stanley). "For their good he condescends to say things which, but for their motive, would be unworthy of an intelligent man. *Than this, no kind of self-denial is to sensible persons more difficult or more noble.*" (Beet.) Return to point quitted at x. 7. "This concluding section . . . filled with traces of the torrent which has passed through his mind in the interval" (Stanley). **Very chiefest.**—"Ever so much of apostles" (Stanley); "superlative apostles" (*Speaker*); "super-apostolic apostles," "super-eminent apostles" (Conybeare and Howson). **Nothing.**—In his own reckoning? or theirs? Both; "as you say . . . and I in a deeper sense agree with you."

Ver. 12. **Signs, wonders, mighty deeds.**—Three Scripture words for miracles, in complete enumeration. Complete definition of a "miracle" given by them. **Signs of an apostle.**—*I.e.* characteristic credentials of an apostle. Cf. "John heard in the prison the" characteristic "*Messiah-works*" reported as done by Jesus (Matt. xi. 2). **In all patience.**—Meaning, probably, refraining again and again, when under great provocation to use His miraculous power to silence or punish opponents? (Waite, in *Speaker*). How easily and certainly would this challenge have been met and this claim refuted if miracle is an impossibility, or if Paul had wrought none. His opponents could do none; fell short here, at least.

Ver. 13.—Ironical, "*this wrong.*" **Forgive me.**—Prospective, as well as retrospective, "for I am going to do it again. Don't think of giving me anything, now that we are to be friends again."

Ver. 14.—Understand, "to *come* a third time"; not merely "*am ready* a third time." Two visits to Corinth? Or three? Most, "three." Some: two, viz. (1) Acts xviii. 1; (2) The visit now impending, and, between, the intended visit of i. 15, 16. "I ought to do this, as a parent. What do children, then, give their parents in return? Children, give me your hearts."

Ver. 15.—Notice the R.V., and its margin. How Christ may borrow these words!

Ver. 16.—"You say,—I will not dispute,—I did not ask you to maintain me. But that was only 'the depth of the fellow'! It amounted to 'pretty much the same thing,' if I asked you to support my friends, Titus and the rest! Indeed, what if they 'all helped themselves out of this collection money,' pretending to be so extremely disinterested!"

Ver. 18. **Spirit.**—As usual, the Holy Ghost. Cf. Gal. v. 25. This secures the walking in the same "spirit," in the feeble, modern sense.

Ver. 19.—Observe new and better reading, and consequent vivid rendering. "Whilst you have been reading this (apologetic-seeming) letter." "To *you*? O dear no! Not at all! Before a seeing, listening God I speak!" **Beloved.**—A relapse into love; cannot bear to keep up the tone of rebuke or irony: "*Beloved.*"

Ver. 21.—A residual section, not even now penitent or submissive, as most who had been rebuked in the First Epistle now were.

### Fuller Notes on Special Points.

1. [Good note in Stanley upon vers. 1-10. "The description of his vision . . . throws light upon similar ecstasies . . . as Acts x. 10, viii. 39; and especially of John in the Apocalypse (i. 10, iv. 1, etc.); the 'dreams and visions' . . . in Acts ii. 16; and the speaking with tongues in 1 Cor. xiv. 2. The details may be different, but this description contains their common characteristics; the loss of self-consciousness [?], the sense of being hurried into a higher sphere, and the partial and mysterious glimpses of the invisible world. And it illustrates especially the ecstatic state in which he himself largely partook, as appears from the attacks of his enemies, still preserved in the Clementines. . . . Compare also the facts in Acts ix. 12, xxii. 17, and his expression in 1 Cor. xiv. 8. . . . And further, the strong line of demarcation which he has drawn between his ecstasy and his ordinary state, is a warrant to us that he does not needlessly confound things human and Divine, things earthly and things spiritual. What he does say gives us a picture, at least conceivable, of the mode in which he may have received his 'revelations from the Lord' (1 Cor. xi. 23, xv. 3; Gal. i. 12, 16). What he does not say—the silence respecting the things which cannot be uttered—furnishes a remarkable contrast to the elaborate description given by Mahomet, of his nocturnal journey to Jerusalem and to paradise" (p. 563).]

2. [So also this sobriety of language and thought marks off Paul's experiences from those "parallels" often adduced to discredit him, as a half-epileptic whose brain was affected by his sickness. *E.g.* as enumerated by Farrar, p. 713: "The trances of Socrates, the fits of Mohammed, accompanied by foaming at the mouth, and followed by the sleep of exhaustion, the faintings and ecstasies of St. Bernard, St. Francis, and St. Catherine of Siena, have been adduced as parallels. . . . We may add the cases of George Fox, Jacob Behmen, of Swedenborg, etc."]

3. [Ver. 7. **Thorn in flesh.** In the *pulpit*, the general result of the inquiry is alone of much service. In the Bible-class, the detailed process may be useful.

I. "*Thorn*," or "*stake*." Some Eastern *thorns* are much larger than ours; long, stout spines, capable of penetrating a thick leather boot. (Force given to Hos. ii. 6.) Word does mean stake, *e.g.*, for military palisade, or *for impaling criminals*. Also, *literally*, Paul says, "A stake *for* the flesh." Hence the suggestion that this stake is practically (as *the word* was lexically) equivalent to *a cross* (which had not *necessarily* a cross beam); and the thought here is then linked with "I am crucified with Christ." But in Num. xxxiii. 55 Paul's word is used for "pricks *in the eyes*." In both cases, therefore, the idea may be a **thorn buried in the flesh,** but **large enough,** or **giving pain enough, to be rather a stake** than a thorn.

II. *Nature* of the *affliction*. *Physical* (almost universal consensus of opinion amongst non-Romanist expositors). But not (1) *Sensual temptation*; later Patristic, monastic, Romanist view. He would not "*glory*" in these, for any reason, direct or indirect. Remember also how he (perhaps) claims to be little affected by these (1 Cor. vii. 8, 9). 1 Cor. ix. 27, Rom. vii. 23 quite general in reference; latter scarcely personal. Also not (2) *Spiritual temptation, e.g* stings of conscience about past life, temptations to pride [N.B. the thorn itself was a *check to pride* in spiritual gifts], or discouragement, or doubt, in connection with his work (Calvin, Luther, *Imitation of Christ*). No trace of these in his writings. *Lias* (*in loco*) thinks Paul suffered from irritability of temper, and a consequent asperity of manner. But this would not be in "the flesh," in the physical sense required here. Also, again, would anything, even the glory of Christ (indirectly secured), have made him "*glory*" in these? Further, not (3) *Opponents*, particularly the opponent (possibly) mentioned in x. 7; Greek fathers' view. Not personal enough nor definite enough for "*thorn*," "*in the flesh.*" Nor (4) *Afflictions and persecutions*. Would he have prayed—could he have hoped—for the removal of (3) or (4)? (5) Facts are: (*a*) Probably (*not certainly*) this to be identified with Gal. iv. 14. (*b*) Something which made his appearance less impressive than, for his work's sake, he could have desired. [Lystrans "*called Barnabas*," not Paul, "*Jupiter*," perhaps as the nobler-looking, as well as because

Paul was a better representative of the eloquent "*Mercury*." Some foundation for what Corinthian depreciators said, "*bodily presence weak*" (x. 10). Observe, "*despised not*" (Gal. iv. 14); he might have expected that they would.] (*c*) This "*buffeted*" him. [Not the *boxer's* blow as in 1 Cor. ix. 27; but the "*slap*" as given to Christ (Matt. xxvi. 67); and 1 Cor. iv. 11, 1 Pet. ii. 20.] Not only, or chiefly, Satan's *hindrance to his work*; also, and first, it was expressly something from God, overruled as a rebuff and *check to* (possible) spiritual *pride*. (*d*) Too precarious to decide precisely for (say) *acute ophthalmia*. [Very common in East; aggravated by the excessive light and glare; very *sharply* painful, recalling Num. xxxiii. 55 again.] Not certain that his three days' blindness at Damascus left any effects. Gal. iv. 15 does not (in Greek) say "your *own* eyes," but "your *eyes*." Gal. vi. 11 *may* mean "in how large letters"; but, even so, this may have been for emphasis, to exhibit vividly, and call special attention to, his unusual concern about them. Still, he did for some reason generally employ an amanuensis; a defective sight well explains Acts xxiii. (a saying for which he never expresses any degree of regret, as he does for another on the same occasion, ver. 6, cf. xxvi. 5, as if it were not quite consistent with Christian sincerity and simplicity). Nothing must be inferred from, *e.g.*, xiii. 9, which is used of others also. (*e*) Earliest Patristic identifications were *headache*, *earache*, etc.—all physical. Much modern favour toward *epilepsy*. [Sometimes with a plain *animus*.] A parallel with the case of Alfred the Great (whose mysterious sickness *may* have been epilepsy) very tempting. [See in Lightfoot, *Galatians*. Also Napoleon said of Archduke Albert, who, with great tactical genius, was often at critical moments in a campaign or battle rendered helpless by it, "If it had not been for that, the Archduke would have been the greatest general of us all."] **An acutely painful, visible, humiliating, (hindering), chronic, physical visitation.**]

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 1—10.

*Human Life circumscribed by Limitations.*

I. (Ver. 1.) Paul repeatedly points out how Expediency is a limitation upon Liberty (1 Cor. vi. 12 and || s). Here **Necessity is a limitation to**, and overrules, **Expediency**. 1. As a general, safe rule for conduct and speech, "*glorying*" is "*inexpedient*." Between man and man it is "bad form." The gentleman "*vaunteth not himself*" (1 Cor. xiii. 4). This Modesty—self-suppression, self-effacement—is a social virtue, sometimes severed from its true Christian root, Humility. The Christian is modest before men because he knows that before God he is, and has, nothing of himself. 2. Between God and man "*glorying*" is out of place altogether; a sin against the very relation between them; of whom the One is all Giver, the other entirely a receiver, and has, indeed, in himself nothing to give *status* before, or acceptance with, God at all. 3. Boasting manifests self; ministers to self; gives Devil an opening for further temptation; to *self-exaltation* in the man himself; to *man-worship* in his friends and partisans (ver. 6). Yet, 4. May need to do violence to the instincts of modesty and humility, and speak out plainly and fully one's character and position. Principle may be involved. Paul is compelled to speak and "glory" by charges and insinuations which not only, or principally, impinged upon him, but really struck at Christ, Who had made him an apostle, and had charged him with work which could only be done if he were really such. "*Of such a one, . . . but not of myself*." I speak of him, because I must, as if he were some other man, to whom God was wonderfully gracious (ver. 5). If I begin about *myself*, I must play on another theme, "*weaknesses*." A man may represent principles. A minister may need, for his Church's sake and his brethren's, to defend his *status* and ordination. For his converts' sake, he may need to assert the validity of his and their position, and the truth of his preaching. His personal character may have to be asserted. "We were not 'Yes and No' men among you; else, perhaps, you had a 'Yes and No' Gospel, a 'Yes and No' Christ" (2 Cor. i. 18 *sqq.*). 5. Above all, when what one is, and has become, and accomplished, is needed as a testimony for Christ. If it will preach Him to put oneself forward; if others will be encouraged to hope in Him for larger blessings, and through Him

to accomplish larger service,—then one must crucify modesty, reticence, reserve, and must say out, and give Him credit for, all He has done in one's own case. But always reluctantly, always with prayerful guard upon one's spirit, and always "dropping" it, as soon as may be (vers. 1, 5, 6).

II. **Limitations of knowledge.** "*I know . . . I know not*" (vers. 2, 3).—1. Our known area is very narrow, a little rock standing up out of midst of waves of a sea of mystery, not absolutely bottomless, (ours is *finite* ignorance); but soon too deep for our stature. We wade out from our little bit of dry ground; we soon are out of our depth; the only difference between "wise" and "ignorant" is that some are taller than the rest, and can go little farther out before losing their footing or sinking overhead. If we quit the little, clear, light area, we soon find ourselves lost in pathless fog, and must turn back. We soon beat our wings against the bars of our imprisonment. [Origin of being, of creaturely being; ultimate meaning of "matter," etc. In theology, or philosophy, no matter what track of inquiry is pursued, or in what direction, we very soon find ourselves face to face with dead walls, impassable, *e.g.* the Problem of Evil.] 2. Here an inspired man, supernaturally assisted, has been led to depths ordinarily beyond man; has been taken, indeed "*caught up*," to heights, as yet, usually inaccessible. Indeed, he has been led through the Veil—lifted over one of the highest of the Barrier-walls that environ us—and now comes back, knowing where he has been, and what he has seen and heard; but not knowing how he got there; nor whether indeed *all of him* went there, or whether the body was left behind. And as to telling his experiences—no! 3. He cannot; or if he could, he may not. Human language, human thought, have no vessels to hold and carry and convey such contents. We ask him many questions, but in vain; and he breaks off, and leaves us to wonder, and query, and perhaps to chafe against the limitations of our knowledge. ["*Foolish and unlearned questions avoid.*" See how Christ dealt with useless inquiries, impossible or unprofitable to answer. (1) "Few that be saved?" "There are many that be lost! *See that thou enter in at strait gate.*" (2) "What shall this man do?" "Rather, this would I have thee do: *follow thou Me!*" (3) "Who did sin, this man or his parents?" "*We* must work the works . . . whilst it is day!" Sir Henry Wootton was asked, "Can a Papist be saved?" "You may be saved without knowing that; look to yourself."] 3. Our inquiries may only mean curiosity, that (Pilate-like) plays with big questions, and has hardly enough of serious interest in them to make us wait for answer. God has nothing to say, or show, or give, to such. To equip a Paul He will give, with all their limitations, wondrously large "*visions and revelations of the Lord.*"

III. **Limitations to the blessedness of large and gracious communications from God.**—Paul was soon brought back to the body. He was soon *made to know* "*whether in the body*," ordinarily, or not. His body will not let him forget it. The "*thorn*" is a perpetual reminder. 1. *Not even Paul is to be trusted* to hold third-heaven converse with God and Divine things, *without some compensating abatement.* [So after Abraham's victorious waiting in faith for the promised Isaac during a whole quarter of a century, we might have thought that he would have been left peacefully alone, to enjoy his home-life with his boy. No, not even God's tested "friend" must be left many years without some disciplinary circumstances. So, "Offer Isaac up, a burnt offering." If the physical "thorn" were in any way the *result* of the manifestation on the road to Damascus, or of the breaking down of human nature beneath the strain of ecstatic feeling; and thus *consequent upon*, and not simply *subsequent* to, the "revelations"; it would be fully analogous to many ordinary experiences of believers. Such pre-eminent gifts bring their penalties,

or must be had at their price. A great access of holy exaltation in the sanctuary, *e.g.*, or at the Lord's Table, will exhaust the frame, and leave the system dead to all spiritual impression for some time after. The temperament capable of much blessing is also capable of and liable to great depression. 2. *But the limitations are safeguards.* They indicate no grudging of God to see us perfectly happy; no mere "stone put by Him into the other pocket," as if from any "evil eye" towards our pleasure. He means our safety. Such limitations remind us of the "perishing" life; the uncertain tenure of all our earthly good; the vanity of self and human strength. If known to others, they are a salutary, objective check upon self-complacency; they keep the worker from any self-reliance which would dishonour God's sole might working through him; they train habits of dependence upon God. This calls out prayer and faith; these secure Divine strength. And, 3. Best of all, if on His whole view of the conditions of the case, God sees that thus, and only thus, can we be best utilised for the exhibition and glory of His grace; if, to others, and to ourselves, the results and success of our life are so manifestly not to be accounted for on "natural" grounds, or by any "natural" equipment and advantages, (say) of personal appearance, voice, intellectual power; then the limitation which in one direction seems an evil becomes a good, and a new occasion of glorying. And the man who, for such a reason, rejoices in his very limitations, or even gives thanks for them, always finds new *power resting upon* him.

IV. **One thing in our life is without limitation.**—The "*sufficiency*" of the "*grace*" of Christ. 1. Generally, "Sufficient for thee, that thou hast behind thee My strength." The presence of Christ and His strength is a background on which all the detailed working out of life is superposed; a general truth, to be assumed and reckoned with in all the working out of the problem of our life; whatever *may* or *may not* be, that *is*; other persons may enter into or pass out of my life; their help may vary in its adequacy, or may fail altogether, and that at a critical moment,—this is a permanent condition of my life, and as unvarying as permanent. This is a spring never failing, and constant in quantity. I shall find His supply accompanying my Needs, in absolute continuity, two parallel lines running in continuous adaptation. "*Because He ever liveth*," "*saving* (continuously) *by His* (continuous) *life*"; sending me continuous, sufficient, *saving help, to the uttermost* moment and extent of my need. 2. *In detail.* Not merely a general correspondence, Need and Supply lying side by side as two series of incidents. They also correspond in minute detail, new help arising, as new needs are arrived at in one's life-course. Every page in our story shall have its counterpart page in the story of Christ's "*sufficient grace.*" Needs will be many, troublesome, recurrent, petty, urgent, unexpected, unprecedented,—"*He shall supply all your need.*" No draft upon this Friend's supply is ever returned bearing the words, "No effects."

Vers. 7-10. *The Thorn in the Flesh.*

I. **Threefold combination of personalities.**—Christ; Paul; Satan. 1. Personality of last matter of pure revelation. Belief in it stands or falls with degree of final authority accorded to statements of Scripture. Acknowledged that Scripture [and Christ] assume a personal Devil. The "proof texts" from Scripture are (not quite as abundant but) precisely parallel in kind to those by which a personal Holy Ghost is established from Scripture. [1. Personal name given to him; 2. Personal will and intelligence ascribed to him; 3. Personal acts done by him.] In the Order of Evil he is the counterpart of God,—"the god of this world." 2. Paul is here midway; the object of the Lord's care; the object of Satan's attack. (Cf. Luke xxii. 31.) Every man is the centre

of attention to the unseen world of good and the world of evil; the prize of conflict for which they strive together. [Cf. perhaps, as to the very body of Moses (Jude 9).] Every Christian man takes into account another world and another set of agencies, for both danger and deliverance, besides those which enter into the reckoning of the "*man of this world.*" 3. This Evil One is his enemy; he can (under permission; he is a "chained lion," who may not go beyond the radius of activity his Maker and Master and King, *for His own larger purposes*, permits; no such co-ordinate power of evil, an Ahriman parallel to an Ormuzd, as in many heathen religions and philosophies was assumed or taught) inflict physical suffering [assumed also in the case of discipline (1 Cor. v. 5)]. Or, at least, makes the "natural" incidence of physical disorder the occasion and opportunity and basis of his attack. 4. Christ is a mightier Friend. Observe how, as by instinct, Paul cries out for help to Christ; as, a very short while before the first access of Paul's "*thorn*," he had seen and heard dying Stephen do. No neglect of, or dishonour to, the Father: "all men should honour the Son *even as* they honour the Father" (John v. 23). To Paul "to live is *Christ.*" A Christian has One most real, unseen Friend, Whom some day he shall actually see, with Whom even now he has most intimate, constant communication. His life, thought, heart, prayers, turn (sunflower-like) towards Christ. Christian children have no "God" but "Jesus," and the "perfect man" may be a little child in this. Expand this:

II. **A twofold contrast of purposes.**—1. Same set of physical circumstances, Janus-like, has two faces, wears two aspects. From the Christward side they are a safeguard, a piece of moral training, "*lest I should be exalted*," etc. From the Satanward side, they are an "*angel*" of his "*to buffet.*" 2. All our life is complex; no single, simplest incident, but has many-sided relations to every other—equally many-sided—incident. All is ethical. Everything is "a providence," *i.e.* an item, a factor, in God's great "providence," *i.e.* His wise, loving scheme for our life, designed, ordered, executed for our "good" (Rom. viii. 28). Even physical, natural disadvantages, which "handicap" in the race, or disable one hand for the conflict, or make us (Jacob-like) halt upon our thigh for the pilgrimage, have wise, loving, high place amongst the elements of the education of God's children. "*Thorns*" are "*given*" *by God;* but it is the business of the Evil One to take each of these and endeavour to make it serve his evil turn. Thus each is of God, or of Satan, according as it may be regarded. We may say with equal truth, and with equal devoutness, "God is in this"; or "Devil has a hand in this." (Cf. 2 Sam. xxiv. 1; 1 Chron. xxi. 1.) (How far any of them is permitted to *originate with* him, we cannot say. Part of the insoluble Problem of Evil which sooner or later blocks the way of moral inquiry, in every religion, in every philosophy.) 3. Particularly, such a sharply painful reminder of his physical limitations may appeal in one of two ways to an earnest, holy worker for Christ. [*E.g.* excessive nervousness which will not allow the full heart and competent brain to deliver with any sort of effect its urgently needed message; or want of stamina, which prevents any continuous or trying work being undertaken, for which in all other respects the man is admirably qualified, or which gives way even under great spiritual exaltation and blessing such as would effectively equip him for service, or which perpetually lays him aside in the midst of successful work, or relegates him altogether to invalid-couch or sick-room; or some actual disease or defect, blindness, deafness, lameness, skin affection, crippling or rendering free intercourse with others almost impossible; and the like.] (1) It may come like a smart "slap in the face" to a busy talker, or worker; like a sharp blow upon the ankle to the eager runner; like the sharp prick of a big thorn in the hand, which makes the worker drop his work, or the carrier his vessel. It may "pull up," by the want of natural "capital," the

man of eager, large heart, and broad views, who sees how to do a large business for Christ. The work must go undone, the scheme be only in part carried out. "If only I had So-and-so's five talents of natural endowment!" Less work seems done than might otherwise be: Satan's aim seems thus well served! Then if the man chafes, or begins to "wonder" about the wisdom and love of his limitations—why he has not five talents like So-and-so, why he must have this thorn in the flesh, he sets the door open for Satan to find an almost invited entrance. Or (2) he may rise higher, and so get a broader view. "See the perils of *five* talent men! If I had the treasure in So-and-so's vessel, instead of my poor earthen one (2 Cor. iv. 7), I might be tempted to . . . ! Perhaps I 'cannot carry corn.' Perhaps my Master knows that the build of my ship will not let me carry a large cargo of blessing and revelation without a big ballast of compensating limitations. If I had that man's personal presence, and address, and social gifts, and clearness of thought, and readiness of utterance, and faculty of persuasion, and skill in organisation, and abundant, unbroken health, perhaps my Lord could not also trust me with the spiritual equipment, the disclosures of His heaven, and of Himself, and the unspeakable words of our close fellowship, which are so often a holy secret between Him and my soul; and I should from that side be disabled for the work He honours me to do." So rather he is led to—

III. **One blessed issue.**—Paul is saved from personal, spiritual peril; he is brought down to the perfect fitness for a display in Him of Christ's strength; Christ is glorified. 1. Think of Paul in danger of pride, "boasting of what he received, as though he had not received it" (1 Cor. iv. 7), in regard to his full experiences. See how near great blessing is to great danger; "thin partitions do the bounds divide." A man of great "revelations" is "in slippery places." No great wonder if the men of great reputation, or profession, sometimes make a great fall. Sin is never far away, nor Satan. Paul's physical disqualifications kept others from unduly exalting him, and kept him from unduly exalting self. He learns to thank Christ for what keeps him from going too near the giddy edge. 2. Better still, his own manifest limitations *leave the field clear* for the display of Christ's strength. He learns to make a new occasion of "boasting" out of the very "infirmities" [afflictions, not *sins*], which are a foil the better to set off the "grace of Christ" in perfect display. Our "strength" is sadly in the way of our being "successful"; we cannot be trusted with success; there must not even be the danger that the glory of "success" should even seem to be shared with man. It must be evidently Christ, not Paul. Christ reduces His best workers to "*nothing*" (ver. 11), that they may plainly be nothing except His instruments. "Dost thou desire the work done perfectly, in My perfected strength?" "Yes, Lord." "Then I must say 'no' to thy prayer. Thou must keep thy '*thorn*'; must do thy—My—work, conditioned by *it*; I will perfectly strengthen thee; thou shalt not be useless; and I shall be glorified." 3. All leads up to this. Paul's prayer turns to Christ; Satan's buffeting is ruled, conditioned, utilised by Christ; above all, Paul's weakness sets him aside, so that the figure in full view, and the strength in palpable evidence, are Christ and His strength. ["How heroic," we say of an ordinary worker in some secular field, who persists and triumphs and leaves the world better, in the face of some great natural, physical, painful limitation. Paul was really "heroic," to do what he did, with a perpetual, hampering "thorn." Yet he says, not "heroism" but, "**grace.**"]

## SEPARATE HOMILIES.

Ver. 7. "*Lest . . . lest.*" *The Perils of Great Grace.*

I. **The privilege of it.**—"Caught up into Paradise, hearing *unspeakable words.*" Whatever they meant to Paul, these words suggest the many moments of wonderful exaltation of spirit to believers; of close communion, when "*the secret of the Lord*" is told to "*them that fear Him*"; of mountain-top fellowship, when the unseen is revealed, and Moses and Elijah speak of the atoning "*decease,*" and hearts cry, "*Good to be here!*" The Word speaks things to our inner ear, which call up suggestions, and waken hope and desire, "*groanings which cannot be uttered.*" The Spirit leads out in desire vaguely large, too large to be apprehended or clothed in language. Preacher's heart gets filled with his theme, with yearning over his hearers beyond what is common. Regions where very few walk; into which very few Christians penetrate at all. On our knees, in the Sanctuary, at the Lord's Table.

II. **The peril of it.**—Must be remembered that *perfect holiness* would include *perfect humility.* 1. *Lest:* begin to carry head high, as one of the privileged ones who have the *entrée* into the Presence, looking down upon the common run of fellow-Christians, the Mordecais at the gate, who never hear, see, get, care for, "nor are capable of," such things; begin to despise these less richly favoured ones, or uncharitably esteem them as "less devoted, less earnest, a poor half-hearted set of people"; begin to forget that all such special blessing is only a means to greater usefulness, that all is given that we may give, not that we may simply felicitate ourselves, or enjoy our portion alone; such gifts are—as after Pentecost—to be brought into the common stock, for the help of the Church. [Peril of losing oneself and of losing the blessing in over-subtle analysis of "the blessing"; of *dilettante*-like expositions of it, till nothing is left but the *æsthetics* of "experience," and a sensuous self-indulgence in the mere joy of the "revelations."] Then comes peril lest Satan get advantage, and the Spirit be withdrawn. The fall of the highest is the lowest. Don't envy the five-talent man; pray for him! 2. Yet even at the price of such a peril, we shall welcome and glory in the revelations. "He revealed His Son in me."

III. **The safeguard.**—Perhaps 1. Some "*buffet in the face,*" some "*thorn in the flesh.* Note (1) Paul *was* in fact kept safe from the peril. Much grace can always be kept by getting *more* grace. No *necessity* that after exaltation should come pride, or self-complacency, or contempt and harsh judgment of others. Christ can keep the highly honoured man, though both his own heart and Satan put him into peril. Note (2) No need in times of specially "*abundant revelations*" to begin to look out for the sending of some "*thorn in the flesh.*" Or after some unusual blessing to say, "Ah! now I shall have some big trial." As if some unusually bright weather in our pilgrimage were bound to bring a storm. 2. Always *the grace of Christ.* "This sufficeth, *sufficeth*, **sufficeth**, for thy soul: viz. thou hast My grace! Say no more; fear no more; rest there."

Ver. 8. "*Unanswered Prayer.*"

I. **An apparent contradiction.**—How many Scripture passages run in the strain of: "*Him that cometh . . . I* will **in no wise** cast out." "*Whatsoever things ye desire, . . . believe that ye receive them*" [not "*will* receive"; indeed, R.V. "*received*"], etc. Yet did not Christ in effect "*cast out*" the rich young ruler? Did not Paul thrice ask—like his Lord in Gethsemane—what, in the *terms* of the request, was not granted? Do not we ask much, and strongly "believe" [often this only means strongly persuade ourselves] that we shall have, yet we do not receive it? Sometimes we "ask amiss" (Jas. iv. 3). Sometimes, like

the ruler, we will not accept our blessing upon Christ's terms and fulfil His conditions. Such must be cast out. Further:

II. **The real harmony.**—1. There are no *unanswered* prayers. "No" is an answer, real, true, kind. Prayers, petitioners, are never simply disregarded, nor apply to a God who looks, hears, knows, yet makes *no response*. Always "attends to our voice." God's refusal does not mean indifference or rebuff. 2. God's promise to hear prayer, by no means binds Him to be mechanically at the mere service of His client's wish. [As Faust's "familiar" must obey his every command, however capricious or foolish.] 3. Prayer does include petition; definite requests may be, should be, made; to make them honours God; but they are the requests of children addressed to a greater, wiser Father. He had rather say, 'Yes' than 'No'; always says 'Yes,' if that may fall in with His purpose and training for His child. If He say 'No,' it is that He may take up the desire we imperfectly clothe or conceive, and give it a better embodiment, and one consistent with His larger view of the present conditions, and the future developments of the particular life and its "education." 4. Immediately, and for Paul's mere comfort, the better thing seemed to be to take away the "thorn." Remotely, more widely, with larger consequences of blessing to Paul and to others, and with more glory to the Master Christ, it was better to leave the "*thorn*" and to add the "*sufficient grace*." Take in *all* the conditions, then the balance of advantage, blessing, glory to Christ, is very preponderantly in favour of saying "No" to the mere letter of the request, and giving a larger "Yes" of eternal blessing.

III. **No wrong in repeatedly urging our request.**—Christ did it. Only be careful not to suffer our urgency to lose submissiveness, and become dictation. Keep an ear, a heart, ready to catch the first, plain, tender denial: "Don't ask that any longer." Then "*be silent unto the Lord*" (Ps. lxii. 5, Heb.). *Acquiesce* in, until this grows to *embracing* (ver. 10), His will; until this grows to "*glorying*" in the very "*infirmities*." Especially, if they may be the occasion, the vehicle, the theatre, of a glorious display of the power of Christ. And if the acquiescence be more than mortal strength can compass, grace will bear in upon the soul a strong peace. "*An angel from heaven strengthening*," over against the "*angel from Satan buffeting*." [No need to "*take pleasure*," or to *pretend* to take pleasure, in such things (as in ver. 10), unless they be "for Christ's sake" (1 Pet. ii. 9, 10)].

Ver. 9. "*Tabernacling*."—One of the many lines of reiterated, recurrent, continuous teaching by symbolism which bind Revelation and its Record together into an organic whole. One Mind is in such lines of symbolism seen pursuing Its theme, fulfilling Its purpose, through the ages.

I. **Bible begins and ends with a garden**, a "Paradise of God." God vouchsafing, desiring, *free intercourse* with man; "walking in the garden in the cool of the day,"—at the one end of one Book. At the other, the garden (like the Paradises of Persian Kings) is in a city, New Jerusalem; a great voice proclaims that *God and man are in perfect fellowship again* (Rev. xxi. 3). "The tabernacle of God is with men," etc. (Zech. viii. 8 is fulfilled.) (And earlier: Rev. vii. 15, "tabernacle upon them.") In the earlier Paradise the idea of "tabernacling" does not yet, of course, appear. The actual, illustrative Tabernacle is in date midway between the two Paradises.

II. **God has been all through testifying to His desire for the renewal of communion.**—1. In Israel's camp, Moses had his tent, but there was also another, larger, more costly Tent; understood to be Jehovah's tent; the tent of the True Chief in the camp. Jehovah "spread His tabernacle" among them. Over it, and within it, hung a cloud of glory, the King's symbol, occupying His tent amidst the tents of His nation. 2. "*When the earthly house of*" *His*

"*tabernacle was dissolved*," *there arose* "*a building of*" *Solomon's*. The people are in houses; Solomon lives in a palace; the King must therefore no longer have a tent, but a Palace. Again the cloud comes upon and abides within; the King is resident, and holds His court in His capital, Jerusalem. 3. Just as the earthly house of His dwelling was passing wholly away, to have no structural successor, there came amongst men "*a Building of God*," an Incarnate Word, "*setting up His tabernacle*" (John i. 14) "*amongst us*." John and his fellow-believers are permitted to enter and "*behold His glory*," the Shekinah-cloud of Godhead discernible in Him. (The two *veils* were rent together.) No such emphatic sign of His desire and heart had God hitherto given. This Word *is* Immanuel, and, by what He is, *says* "Immanuel." 4. All this is blessedly reproduced in His people. We have "*seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*." The man in Christ has "*the earthly house of his tabernacle*" (2 Cor. v. 1), and he looks for a day when he shall have a body, a nature, which shall be no (temporary) tent, but a (permanent) "*building*," a temple, fitted to be the eternal sphere of a communion with God which shall be eternal and perfect in Christ.

III. **Meanwhile he walks in and out amongst his fellows, bearing in himself a shrine**; being himself a shrine, in which God dwells by His Spirit [or in the person of Christ (Eph. iii. 17; 1 Pet. iii. 15)]. He turns within, and finds a light and a glory: "God's Son revealed in him." Also the power of Christ spreads a tent over him; invests him, covers him, as did the glory which took possession of Solomon's Temple, with a power and an awful beauty of holiness, evidently not his own. He has been "*endued* with power from on high" (Luke xxiv. 49). Such a life,—as, for example, Paul's,—no wonder that it is a centre of power and prevalent influence. It only rests upon him; it is not inherent; he can be divested of it, if unfaithful to it; but while he wears it, how mighty he is for Christ. [Shall we call it the official garment of the ambassador for Christ?]

Vers. 9, 11. *Strength and Weakness.*

I. "**A distinct principle is announced of universal significance.** 'Strength is made perfect in weakness,' 'When I am weak, then am I strong,' are expressions which have now passed almost into the proverbial language of mankind. It was true, in the highest sense, of Him that uttered it, that '*His* strength was made perfect in the weakness of His sufferings.' The Cross of Christ is, indeed, the strength of Christianity. [His sceptre was a reed; not yet the rod of iron (Ps. ii.).] It was true, also, though not in the highest sense, yet still in a sense so great as to be a lesson and an example to all the world, that His strength was perfected in the weakness of the Apostles, above all, of St. Paul. 'I thank Thee, O Father, that Thou hast concealed these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.' Who can say how much of the purity and simplicity, and therefore universal strength of the first teaching of the Gospel, we owe (humanly speaking) to the humble station and uneducated character of the first Apostles, which thus received, at once, and without perversion or intrusion of alien thoughts, the original impression of the Word made flesh? Who can say how great would have been the loss to the world had the Gospel originated, not in the weakness of Palestine and Galilee, but in the learning of Alexandria or the strength of Rome? And again, in St. Paul himself, it might have seemed at the time to all, as it did on this occasion seem to him, that the cause of the Gospel would have been better served, had he been relieved from his infirmity and gone forth to preach and teach with unbroken vigour of body and mind, his bodily presence strong, his speech mighty and powerful. But history has answered the question otherwise, and has ratified the Divine

answer, in which the Apostle acquiesced. What the Apostle lost for himself, and Christianity lost for the moment, has been more than compensated by the acknowledgment that he was beyond doubt proved to be, not the inventor of Christianity, but its devoted and humble propagator. In his own weakness lies the strength of the cause. When he was weakest as a teacher of the present, he was strongest as an apostle of the future. And what his trial was to him and to the world on a large scale, that the trial of each individual Christian may have been ever since, the means in ways inconceivable to him now, of making himself and others strong in the service of God and man." (Stanley, *Corinthians*, 569.)

II. 1. Compare also: "**The meek**" —not the self-assertive, masterful men, insistent on "rights," combative in their assertion and maintenance, tolerating no smallest slight—"**shall inherit the earth.**" Like their Lord, "*Who shall not strive nor cry . . . until* (in the midst of, and by means of, the work of 'weakness') *He bring forth judgment unto victory.*" The triumph of Christianity in the Roman Empire was the "victory of the vanquished." 2. How often the preacher, the teacher, the worker, do most when they have gone to their work trembling, discouraged, but *the more flung upon God's strength.* History of some men, some ministries, some Churches, is summarised in Hos. xiii. 1. ("*Baal*" has been some idol of self-sufficiency, or human reliance; before which they have bowed down, turning aside from Jehovah to do so.) 3. How the women, the very children, have found all fear vanish, and the flesh strengthened, to walk to the stake for Christ! Sometimes even shaming the men! How the simple women, in Marian days, silenced the cavil and the argument, strong in their only learning,—the Word of God! How they will bear the daily persecution, strong in their very humility, till the very malice of the world gives way, beaten! "Galilæan, thou hast conquered!" 4. Secret of all is, that conscious weakness turns to Infallible Might. (Storm breaks or uproots the oak that will not bend; the pliant sapling escapes, and is the more deeply rooted because of the storm.) Everything that grieves (as does self-sufficiency or reliance on human wisdom or strength) the Spirit, Whose indwelling is our only strength, weakens us. Everything that leaves room for Him to be exalted, brings His strength increasingly. [Illustrate by bar of soft iron, forming the core of an electro-magnet; cold, and in itself powerless to attract or support. Set the current circulating around it, it is full of power, —which disappears, and is gone, in an instant, if the current stop. "Out of weakness" it "is made strong."]

Ver. 14, 15. *God's Appeal to the Soul.* —May fairly borrow these Pauline words and make them the words of God in Christ appealing to the sinner. For "he that hath seen a Christian hath seen Christ" (cf. John xiv. 9; more than a mere rhetorical parallel). He is a *replica* of Christ, and so of God. If Paul feels and does this, he has learned it from Christ. He is "*in Christ*," in it all.

I. **God makes the advances; not man first.**—1. Always *the "law" of His dealings.* "I said, Thy face . . . will I seek, *because* thou saidst (first), Seek ye My face" (Ps. xxvii. 8). After sin's alienation, He makes the first approaches: "*I seek you.*" "The Father *seeketh*" spiritual, sincere worshippers (John iv. 23). We do not solicit the mercy of a reluctant God. No need to "beg Him into the mind" to bless. He is forward, beforehand, with us, proffering, pressing upon our acceptance, His love.

2. *Persistently does this.*—"This third, tenth, thirtieth time I am coming to you, soul!" Through long years of merciful waiting, rebuffed affection, long-tired patience. ["Came seeking fruit these *three* years."] If His patience had not been *His*, it would have given way long ago. "*Come to me. . . . I am meek,* (and therefore

have borne your slight of my love)" (Spurgeon). No runaway knock: "*I stand at* the door, and knock."

3. "*Spent*," is "*spent* out."—"'It is *finished*'; He gave up the ghost." The last was spent, and paid down then.

> "What could your Redeemer do,
> More than He hath done for you?"

The Father "*spared* not His own Son," His unique One, the only "Son" of that kind, the *only*-begotten. Our sin and need required even That Gift; and He would not stop at even That, when it was a question of our "*souls*." How He lavishes love; as if by His gifts to awaken and win for Himself our reluctant, indifferent heart!

4. "*More abundantly*."—Another Divine word. John x. 10; Heb. vi. 17; Rom. xv. 13, v. 15 (our word or its cognates). "My cup" is not simply full but, "runneth over." Man's measure for man is God's measure to man (Luke vi. 38).

5. Think of the ages of preparation for Christ, during which God was "*laying up for the children*."

II. **How man meets the advances.**—[This is the bitter wail of some aged fathers, who have slaved, saved, given life, for sons who think the "old man" a burden: "Why does he not take himself off to heaven or somewhere!"] 1. Think God a "*burden*." [Word (so *Jerome* in Stanley) a local, Cicilian word, root of which was the name of the torpedo-fish.] His clinging love, *hanging around* our neck, caressing, wooing, pleading, is unwelcome; it is counted a dead weight, the cling of a torpedo that shocks, and paralyses, and spoils all our possibility of enjoyment! We grudge what His house and service cost us! Grudge what He asks us to give up, if we are to be His. Yet He does not want it, or want to take it, for *His own sake*. He seeks "not yours, but you." 2. The more He loves, the less He is loved. Heart gets harder under the very impact of His streaming sunshine! How Nazareth thrust back into the heart of Jesus the love that came unsolicited to do "*many mighty works*"! 3. Happy for us, that "*more abundantly*." We build the dykes, and shut the floodgates [as the Dutchmen, for their *good*, shut out the ocean]; but the flood of love flows right over the barrier, and brings life into our barren death.

## *HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.*

Ver. 10. "*Pleasure!*" 1. *Submission* may be much, and more than merely sitting to bear whatever is laid upon us, but with an attitude of heart that means, "I would not if I had any choice. Must bear it; all right, I suppose, but——" 2. Wonderful power of accepting, adjusting self to surroundings. Can accommodate, accustom ourselves to anything; until we move amidst and under the burden of discomfort or deprivation, with a mere *indifference* that stolidly holds on its way, "blow, hail, shine"! 3. *Embracing* the will of God is much more. 4. But "*take pleasure in*"! Unnatural, incredible, impossible,—**True!** 5. "*For His sake*" makes the difference. What a reality, and a power, is Christ in Paul's life! No teacher, no compeller, no enabler, for unwelcome burdens or impossible tasks, like Grateful Love!

Ver. 10. May we make a counterpart saying, "When Paul is strong, then is he weak"? Two suggestions then:

I. Weakness in strength.
II. Strength in weakness.

Or:—

I. "Strong" have "no need" of help, and do not seek it.
II. "Weak" know their need and lay hold of Almighty strength.

Vers. 11-13. "*In all patience*."—May be made central word of paragraph. As usual, "*patience*" is not merely "*endurance*," but "pressing on and bearing up."

I. **His own converts,** who owe him everything, will not say a word for him,—say many against him. "**Be patient, Paul.**" Down, proud heart! Stoop, for the cause' sake, to commend yourself. Crucify personal feeling. Be "*a fool.*"

II. **His enemies** resist him, and decry, and depreciate. Yet he has a credential none of them possess. It might become a weapon against them. But no! "**Be patient, Paul!**" Never use miracle-working power for a weapon of revenge or self-vindication! [Cf. "*Withdrew Himself from them,*" when He could have slain such murderous-hearted wretches, with the same power that had healed the withered hand (Matt. xii. 14, 15). Simply went out of their way!]

III. **His Churches are ready to** think the worst, if he ask an apostle's rightful maintenance. "**Be patient, Paul!**" - Let Philippi help thee, indeed, "once and again" (Phil. iv. 16). But for Corinthians (and Ephesians),—well, thou hast a trade in thy hand; turn to thy tentmaking!

Ver. 14. (See another line of suggestion homiletically dealt with more fully below.)

I. "**Not yours**": your gifts; applause; influence. "I am your *minister* for Christ's sake,"—your servant; not "lording it" over the Lord's "heritage" (1 Pet. v. 13).

II. "**You.**" "Watching for *your souls* as one who must give an account" (Heb. xiii. 17). "Your *love,* for my own sake. And that, because I cannot help you unless I have it. Your *welfare,* here and hereafter; by your conversion and your perfecting in holiness."

Vers. 16-19 (first clause).

I. **Self-vindication sometimes necessary for the credit of religion.**—[Cf. Samuel's self-vindication (1 Sam. xii. 2-4). Yet higher Example: "Which of you convicteth Me of sin?" (John viii. 46). David's assertions of innocence are no personal boasting; they are the appeal of a smarting sense of injustice, involving the cause of God and its credit, to a Higher Court.]

II. **Man** who does it **should be very sure** that he can offer (1) *a clear conscience* to the examination of God; and (2) *clear accounts,* and *a clean record,* to the examination of man. 1. "*In sight of God speak we,*" [Then use may be made of "*boasting,*" and of *irony,*—both edged tools to deal with, and dangerous to a man's own spiritual life. Did Christ ever use irony? F. W. Robertson thought so; "*Full well*" (Mark vii. 9).] 2. Christian men should be more particular than others in money matters. Mercenary motives will be charged; because of the misconduct of some; because the world understands no higher motive; or from pure maliciousness. Poor excuse for *muddle,* hard to distinguish from *dishonesty*: "He meant no wrong!" Particularly in dealing with money of others, or of the Church. In even such secularities, "temporals," Paul and Titus "*walk in the Spirit.*" As the early "deacons" (Acts vii.) were to be "full . . . of the Holy Ghost." Oh for *spiritual* treasurers, secretaries, stewards! 3. There are sins in a man's past record which, though pardoned, and not affecting his present standing or holiness before God, render it inexpedient that he should be in the ministry. Paul and Titus should have clean hands, and a clean record. [Rev. Thomas Collins, on platform of a meeting full of opponents: "Mr. Chairman, Christian friends, I am a man who neither fears the frown, nor courts the smile, of any living. I am a man through whose soul the light of the Sun of Righteousness beams all day and all night." (Coley, *Life of Collins,* 308.) In similar circumstances at Truro he said: "[You say] 'you are designing men.' That is true. I am a designing man. . . . I have a design to draw my family closer to God, and to get my hearers into the same mind. These are my chief designs at present. All others

that I have bow down to them and serve them. Could you this moment scan the naked hearts of my brethren, you would, I doubt not, find some such designs in them." (*Ib.* 309.) *Very close parallels, even in form, to Paul's case here.*]

Ver. 19 (second clause)—21. *A New Testament Nehemiah.*

I. 1. I am coming to Corinth; "to build you up" (ver. 19). 2. I hear, and fear, that I shall find sad havoc and ruin in the Church of God; "walls broken down"; "gates burnt with fire." 3. I shall be such as ye would not: a stern, authoritative, authorised reformer, sparing no wrong, or wrongdoer; as every true minister of Christ must on occasion be. 4. I fear I shall have a bitter hour of speechless humiliation among you (Neh. i. 4; good parallel in Ezra ix. 3, 4).

II. Man who loves, and understands, the true methods and meaning of the Work of God, finds no keener distress, no greater humiliation before God, than in the sins which are the weakness and the shame of the Church.

III. How easily old sins, or the customary sins of our world and our time, regain ascendency over Church members, and creep into the Church. [See again how Nehemiah kept the gates, nor would even suffer the expelled traders to *tempt* his citizens *by remaining even in the neighbourhood of the walls* (xiii. 21).]

## CHAPTER XIII.

### *CRITICAL NOTES.*

Vers. 1-13.—[Good paraphrase, exhibiting connection of thought, from Stanley: "Once, twice, thrice, as in the Mosaic Law of the three witnesses; by my first visit—by this Epistle, as though I had accomplished my second visit—by the third visit, which I now hope to accomplish [this personifying the three (?) visits as three witnesses, somewhat forced and fantastic]—I warn you that I shall not spare my power when I come. You are always seeking for a proof of my Apostleship; you shall have it. For Christ who speaks in me, though in the weakness of humanity He died the shameful death of the cross, in the strength of God He lives and acts still; and in Him, weak and poor as I seem to be, I shall still live and act towards you. But why do I speak of myself? You yourselves, my converts, are the best witnesses of my Apostolical power; and long may you be so! If, indeed, you should have lost this best proof of my Apostleship in the reformation of your own lives, then indeed you shall have the proof of my severity. But my earnest prayer is that there may be no occasion for it. May my power and the proof of it perish if you prove that you do not need it. Against a true and blameless life the highest Apostolical power is powerless; and if you have this power of truth and goodness, I am well content to part with mine. It is to draw you to a sense of this that I write this whole Epistle, in the hopes that my Apostolical authority may be turned to its fitting purpose of building up, not of pulling down."

Ver. 1.—Strong presumption in this verse of *two actual previous visits*; second unrecorded in Acts; opportunity for it during the long stay at Ephesus (Acts xx. 31). Quotation from Deut. xix. 15. "Prepare for a calm, thorough, judicial inquiry when I come, into the facts of all these ugly reports about you which reach me."

Ver. 2. **Before, foretell, heretofore**; only by prefixes to the verbs. Note, as to first case, R.V. margin; a very possible rendering. Better: "Before my second visit I said; and now, before my third, I say." Choice between: "*As if I were*," etc., and "*When I was*," depends on view taken as to two, or three, visits. (Best discussion of this is Conybeare and Howson, chap. xv. Also see Introduction.) **Heretofore**, repeated from xii. 21; *i.e.* "up to now, and *to the rest*, if they be inclined to follow the bad lead of these first sinners." Cf. "*I spare you*" (1 Ep. vii. 28). Omit, "*I write*."

Ver. 3. **In me.**—Emphatic in position; *q.d.* "My opponents say He speaks *in them*, and that He does not speak in me. You ask my proof that He does." Observe the style of an

ancient prophet. Paul is the mouthpiece of Christ, and, further, Christ is the Inspiring God (cf. 2 Sam. xxiii. 2). (Observe "*who*," not "*which*.") Similarly Ananias and Sapphira "sought *a proof*" of the Holy Ghost speaking in Peter. Notice "*toward you*" and "*in you*."

Ver. 4.—An unfaithful convert thought: "Not much to fear from this Christ; Himself He could not save (cf. Luke xxiii. 35); us He cannot punish." [Cf. διά, Gal. iv. 13; ἐξ here.] **Weakness.**—"As you call it, and His enemies esteemed it. As we know it, He was so crucified, under conditions of humanity and its physical limitations which He had chosen to assume and submit to; He died as part of the 'emptying' of Himself. He chose not to draw upon His Divine reserve of power." **We also.**—iv. 10, xii. 10. Paul's familiar thought; shares with our Lord in His redemption history. We have our weakness, our crucifixion, our resurrection, our strength as of a heavenly, enthroned life.

Ver. 5. Connect, "*proof*" (ver. 3); "*examine*" (here); "*reprobate*" (vers. 5, 6); "*approved*"; all cognate in root; *evidence during* trial; *act* of trial; *rejected after* trial; *approved and accredited*, as result of standing the trial well. "Whether they had suggested this word, or the Apostle only attributed it to them, . . . it certainly had seized his mind, and he dwells upon the idea, after his manner, with all kinds of variations. This one word 'proof' is the key to the whole passage, and solves every difficulty." (Pope, *Prayers of St. Paul*, 168.)] [Good illustration of "*approved*" in Rom. xvi. 10: "*Apelles approved in Christ*," *i.e.* a man in Christ (= a Christian) who has been tried by trials, by labours, by persecutions, by time (hardest test of all, to some!), and who has come forth, not "reprobate silver" (Jer. vi. 30) or gold, but (to coin a parallel word) approbate, a vessel on which the Great Assay-master can set His hall-mark "*Approved*."] **Your** (own) **selves.**—Not me (ver. 3). "If you want such a *proof*, the test will be that *you* should turn out able to stand examination."

Ver. 6. **I trust.**—"*Hope*." Partly: "I should like to think that your self-examination will so end as to be the best proof that I am an apostle." Partly, and more sternly: "I shall in any case, if you compel me, hope to show you that I have an apostle's power and authority."

Ver. 7.—"The bearing of your self-examination upon me personally is, however, a small matter. Let me be 'approved' or 'reprobate,' I care not; what I do care about is, that you may really be such as need fear no scrutiny." *Self* would say: "I hope they may be shown up badly; and may so vindicate me, and give me a chance of punishing."

Ver. 8. As Stanley above.

Ver. 9. **Perfecting.**—Not the τέλειος word, but καταρτίζω word. Trace it from (literal) "*Mending* the nets" (Mark i. 19). "A body . . . *prepared* Me" (Heb. x. 5, xi. 3); through, *e.g.*, Gal. vi. 1 ("replace the dislocated member of Christ") to 1 Thess. iii. 10; [a fearful use, in Rom. ix. 22] 1 Cor. i. 10 = Restoration to *corporate* perfectness. "Perfect restoration to ecclesiastical order, and . . . perfect recovery of moral purity; the corporate or Church idea predominating in the word, as its etymology . . . indicates" (Pope, *Prayers St. Paul*, 169).

Ver. 10.—Note R.V.; very clear. Repeated from x. 8.

Ver. 11.—Calm sunset after a stormy passage! Observe R.V. margin (better). **Perfected.**—As in ver. 9. **Comforted.**—With the fuller meaning found, *e.g.*, in "*Paraclete*." **Live in peace.**—"*Peacing it* together," like "*truthing it*" (Eph. iv. 15).

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 1—10.

Three antitheses:—

**A. Present and absent** (vers. 1, 2, 10)
**B. Strong and weak** (vers. 3, 4, 8, 9).
**C. Reprobate and approved** (vers. 5-7).

A. I. How hard to get at truth! We may be intentionally deceived, or undesignedly misled. It is not enough to go upon what *the "household of Chloe"* reported. Very natural, in the (honourable) revolt against such sin as they described, to rush into an emphatic judgment, which may prove, when more facts are known, too strong or unwarranted altogether. Yet it is very hard to recant, especially if we have published our judgment to the world. No hasty, impulsive judgments; especially in apostles or persons responsible for the discipline and purity of a Church. Nor on mere hearsay evidence. Judge gives the presumption on the prisoner's side, until he hears all. Weigh, wait, watch for new facts; inquire patiently. "Against an elder," etc. (1 Tim. v. 19). Eliminate thus the personal, in regard to the testimony, and to the verdict,

The "*two* or *three witnesses*" were rather jury, assessors to the judge, than witnesses in modern judicial sense. Good rule also for private conduct, as well as for official and disciplinary. "First, tell him his fault, *between thee and him alone*" (Matt. xviii. 15). Get face to face with the man, and, as far as possible thus, with the facts. "*Then* take with thee one or two more," etc. (*ib.*).

II. When truth is ascertained, then action must be decisive. Sin is in itself a grievous evil, and damaging to the Church; a cancer eating its inner life, a leprosy making it offensive to the outer world. Faithfulness to God—the Holy—and faithfulness to men, require prompt, decisive action; faithfulness to the faithful membership, to the unfaithful member (who may thus be made to see his sin, and be led to repentance; it is no kindness to the sinner to deal with his offence with unholy tenderness), and to the outside world (to which it is important that "the Salt" should have its full and unmixed "savour" of grace and holiness) requires it. Remedial measures, if it may be; excision (Gal. v. 12) if nothing less severe will suffice. As of the magistrate, so of the Church discipline: "Wouldst thou have no fear of the power?" etc. (Rom. xiii. 3). And all this in the presence of the offender, if possible. (The Apostle is a "Visitor" in the old Church and college sense; to inquire into abuses, or offences, and to remedy or punish.)

III. Note how all this reflects God's method. "Swift to hear" [knowing everything that can be said for the wrong-doer; giving full, loving, gracious weight to it; perhaps, now and then, judging more leniently than even the awakened conscience itself does]. "Slow to wrath" [Paul's "longsuffering"—his reluctance to hasten to Corinth until all wrong was put away—"leading them to repentance" (Rom. ii. 4)]; "waiting" if so be He, "may be gracious" (Isa. xxxix. 8). Paul did, God does, we should, "lay the axe at the root of the trees"; for use, if it must be; but also rather that the tree may take heed and make the axe needless. But in the "*day of visitation*" (as above) He too will "*use sharpness.*" "*If* He *come again* (in that day) He *will not spare.*" [I. Christ absent; II. Christ present.] The "wrath" of the tenderest natures; the indignation against wrong which is born of the deepest loyalty to, and love of, right (as in Paul); are the most "*sharp*" and terrible. ["Wrath *of the Lamb*" (Rev. vi. 16).] In all that Paul says, in the lines on which he acts and proposes to act, we see "*Christ speaking in him.*"

B. **Paul** is "in Christ.—1. He lives Christ's life over again: "Crucified with Christ." And **his crucified life is modelled on the lines of his Lord's**; it was "*weakness*" to suffer Himself to be crucified; it seems to the wrong-doers at Corinth "*weakness*" in Paul, whom they may ignore or defy, that he does not come as in the First Epistle he had said he would, but holds his hand from executing the punishment he threatened. [So men think and speak of God and His Christ in this the day of forbearance. "Weakness!" "Sentence . . . not executed speedily" (Eccles. viii. 11). "Thoughtest . . . such a one as thyself" (Ps. l. 21). He suffers them "to crucify Him afresh and put Him to an open shame"; yet generally "makes no sign." Intellectual revolt against His Divine Authority, heart revolt against His holy Law; political refusal of recognition of Christian principle in legislation; He sits, above them all, "keeping silence." World grows defiant; Church grows impatient and fearful. But no! Don't misinterpret the weakness!] 2. Notwithstanding the seeming weakness, **behind and beneath there is reserve strength in Paul.** Comparable to His Who even now "*lives*" again—the day of His humiliation and "*weakness*" over—*through the power of God* ["*through*," for this raised Him (*e.g.* Acts ii. 33, v. 31, "by" and "at"), and dwells in Him, inherent, native, His own] Comparable to, and also really derived from, connected with, it. "*We shall live*" (in the like strength) "*with Him*" (if we come to Corinth to punish). The executive hand is "*strong*" or "*weak*," according as the whole body, the whole

man, is "strong or "weak." A twofold reserve in Christ: "wrath treasured up against day of wrath" (Rom. ii. 5) [as if in a huge reservoir, gathering behind the dam of His forbearing, longsuffering mercy in Christ; to burst some day in sweeping, overwhelming might, carrying all evil away before it]; and a fulness of "*the power of God*," for the defence of His Church and His Truth, for the support of His servants in their conflicts, for the vindication of the needful authority of Church discipline, and for "bringing forth the judgment" between Him and "the world" "unto victory." A very real "moral" support all this to the loyal, righteous party in Church and world. They may count on Him and His strength. The day of His "weakness" is really also a day of His Divine might. 3. This present-day "power" He would rather make remedial; "weak *against* you; strong *in* you, if you will"; would rather "*edify*" than "*destroy*." The one supreme concern to Paul, to Christ, to all who are responsible for the government, the purity, of a Church, is "*that ye do no evil*," but "*do that which is honest*." No Jonah-like "anger," if all the threatenings end in nothing, turned aside by reformation of Nineveh, or Corinth. "We are content to be '*weak*,' helpless, on these conditions. Do you do '*the truth*,' and then we can do nothing. In that way you can make us 'powerless.'" The very heart and purpose of God are seen here! "Not willing that any should perish, but," etc. (2 Pet. iii. 9). "This we wish: *Your perfection*." "Behold the Goodness and the Severity of God" (Rom. xi. 22).

C. **Reprobate or approved.**—(See Separate Homily on ver. 5.) 1. Can the ministry stand its trial, and the challenge of friends or foes? Yes, if the people can! Does Christ speak in the ministry? Well, answer by another question,—Is Christ in the people! And are they in the faith? A living Church is the best credential of a real ministry. 2. A faithful minister will, laudably, desire to be evidently "approved": (1) Before God, Who knows his heart, and observes his conduct, and tries his work. (2) In the knowledge and conscience of his brethren and his people,—by the power which accompanies his word, the immediate success which crowns his efforts, and the abiding fruitfulness which follows them. 3. He will not allow himself or his people to have their attention diverted to other so-called tests: "Good financier"; "Capital with young people"; "See the numerical increase"; "During his pastorate the Church has raised so much, has spent so many thousands over building"; "Great influence in the city"; "What an intellectual or wealthy and important congregation gather round him." All good, in varying degree; every one an excellence which may be laid under contribution to do admirable service for Christ; all efficient equipments, if thoroughly consecrated, for a minister of Christ. Yet they may only be "*proofs*" of an "able" man. No true minister will be satisfied to gather round him a mere aggregation of hearers at a popular preaching centre, with hardly sufficient community of interest or life to make them a congregation; and still less to gather anything but a real Church, whose members are by his ministry being led to a life of which the secret is that they "*are in the Faith*," and that "*Christ is in them*." All other may be "*proofs*" of secular, "natural" success, unsatisfying to a "spiritual" man, or to the "spiritual" judgment. Perish everything; even let him be accounted "*reprobate*" ["a poor preacher; ought never to have entered the ministry!"], if only, "*strong*" in Christ's "*strength*," he gather and train an "*approved*" people!

## *HOMILETIC ANALYSIS.—Verses* 11—14.

I. "**Brethren!**"—After all he has had to rebuke, to threaten, to denounce. If we wait for ideal men, or Churches, shall never have any Christian fellowship. In even the most imperfect embodiment of the Church ideal, or the ideal of

Christian manhood, Christ sees, and the Christlike heart and judgment do not undervalue or overlook, possibilities of better things. Only Death is hopeless; imperfect life may be healed, trained, perfected. Ourselves are not ideal; we need that other "*brethren*" should be patient with, helpful of us; let us say and feel, to even the most imperfect: "*Brethren.*" Christ knew, when He first accepted them (and us), and still knows, whilst He continues to accept them (and us), very much more that is evil, than they or we know of each other or of ourselves. How patient He is; remembering what (Corinthian) training has been, and (Corinthian) surroundings are. Not tolerating, or conniving at, sin; yet not disowning or casting off (until all help is refused, all remedial grace spent in vain) His "brethren!" It will do us good, and will often enable us to help others better, to overlook, or *underlook*, the Actual, and believe in, and see, and work with, the Ideal in them. [See how taking the best for granted is made to regenerate the Earl in *Little Lord Fauntleroy.*]

II. **Yet this charity to persons will not be laxity in regard to principles.**—The Ideal must be held up in all its beauty—imperiously, exactingly, demanding that we should "obey" its truth (Gal. iii. 1). Christian or Church well-being means nothing less than, nothing lower than, **Peace.** 1. *A peace within*, in the renewal of our own natures. No "peace" without "holiness" (cf. 1 Thess. v. 23; He who "*sanctifies*" is "*the God of peace*," as here). "*Peace*" is only absolute when reached through "*perfection.*" [An artist says that beauty in his work includes and rests upon a perfect balance and harmony between its parts, nothing jarring or discordant; corporate unity (so to speak) is secured in the picture.] 2. *Peace with the fellow-members.* "*Be* (imperative) *of one mind*" [men can *choose* to be of one mind, *if they will*, to a larger extent than they do and are]; "one hope," the Same "*Comforter*" in them all; one aim; one heart. 3. *Peace with* the three-one *God*, through grace, by love, in fellowship. There must be Personal Experience, Unity with the Church, Fellowship with God through His grace. (See Separate Homilies on ver. 14.)

## *HOMILETIC SUGGESTIONS.*

Ver. 5. *The Faith.*

I. "**In the Faith**" may come only to mean that men accept the Creed. (*Fides quæ creditur.*) Do not be satisfied unless you are in the bonds of the community whose unity rests on the Faith which saves *into*, and *in*, Christ. (*Fides quâ creditur*, and more.)

II. **Test of this true faith is**: "Is Christ in you?" Evidenced, to your own consciousness, and to the observation of others. All articles of the Creed centre finally in Him. Does an indwelling Christ make all the articles living truths, which you know and believe, because you have lived, and are living, your way into knowledge and faith. Are they each verified by your experience?

Ver. 5. *Self-examination.*

I. **Paul's immediate point is self-examination.**—[So, in Gal. vi. 4, we have: 1. Scrutiny of self; 2. Joy in self; 3. Responsibility for self.] Corinthians were ready to put *him to* "*proof.*" General rule: More ready to sit in judgment upon others than upon ourselves. [Look at 1 Cor. xi. 31; Matt. vii. 1.] This ministers to curiosity, love of gossip, tends to a subtle self-complacency after comparison of others with ourselves. Yet really the harder thing. We do know some, if not all, the facts about ourselves; are, or may be, cognisant of even our most secret motives, know all that would tell against, and all that would tell *for*, us, if others knew us so far "completely" as we ourselves do. We cannot know all the facts about others. Every man is a problem to himself; how much more to others who only know what he chooses to allow to

come to the surface in character and life. Sometimes this scrutiny of others is merely one of many forms of occupation for a mind afraid to begin seriously to examine itself. How often does fuller, subsequent light show how useless our judgments of others were, and how wrong our conclusions; what waste of time over our inquiry, and what waste of words and of "heroic" display of virtuous indignation and condemnation! Utterly beside the mark, and a great sin against the Spirit of Christ. Cannot help knowing many facts about others; cannot help passing judgment upon, and drawing conclusions from, the facts. But we shall remember how incomplete our data, how imperfect our methods, how little we often are really concerned in the matter. *Self*-examination very profitable; mere curious examination of *others* very perilous to the soul.

II. **What is self-examination?**—Two words here found significantly together: "*examine*," "*prove*" (πειράζω, δοκιμάζω). [Good article on them in Trench, *Syn.*, lxxiv.] First is the common word for "tempt," in the original, *neutral* sense (both in Greek and English; so in Mal. iii. 10, 15 "prove" and "tempt" are same word), as well as with the evil associations which have gathered (accidentally) around it. Second is the technical word in classical Greek for putting money to the proof; the foundation idea being to prove whether a thing is worthy to be *received* or not. In New Testament use, latter generally implies a successful endurance of the proving, and, indeed, a desire and hope and purpose on the part of the person testing, that such should be the issue; the former predominantly (*evidently not so here*) suggests endeavour and hope to discover, awake, strengthen, existing evil. [Familiar illustrations of πειράζω are: boring to examine strata, or find water or minerals or gold; putting in the cheese-taster ("*taste*" and "*test*" are akin). Cf. δοκιμάζω, which suggests the fire and crucible of the goldsmith, "the refiner and purifier of silver" (Mal. iii. 3), to show purity, or to secure it by removal of dross or alloy; the periodical Trial of the Pyx at the Abbey, Westminster; the testing of chains or springs at the factory before sending out for use; not in order to discover or make flaws or weakness, but to vindicate soundness or strength.] *Q.d.* "Bore down into your life-strata; see what your foundation is, what store of worth and goodness grace has put within you. Try your quality and your gracious 'flavour,' 'savour.' See whether you be the genuine article, according to the name upon you 'Christian'; by this time the fine metal, or at least getting purer by the sanctifying effect of the processes of Providence and Life. Try your strength for resistance and for weight-carrying, for the service of man and of Christ."

III. **Need of it.**—1. Same need, as in business, for going over stock, balancing moneys, watching wear and tear. Many (spiritually) trading long after insolvent. Going on, keeping up the business name: "**A. B., a man in Christ**"; dealt with by others, employed in the Church on that basis, long after original capital—the grace of acceptance into Christ and the Family, of regeneration after Christ—has been sinned away by the man himself, or has been, in his negligence, stolen away by the world, or by secret, heart sins which grieved the Spirit. Constant wear and tear, loss and gain, going on in the religious life. No headway is ever made without perpetual, unrelaxing effort. [All our progress is against stream; against all the current of tendencies within and of influences from without. Cease rowing vigorously; your boat slackens, stops, is borne backward and downward.

> "Non aliter quam qui adverso vix flumine lembum
> Remigiis subigit; si brachia forte remisit,
> Atque illum in præceps prono rapit alveus amni."
>
> —*Virg., Georg., I.*, 201-203.

*Status quo* is not maintained without constantly new grace given, and constant, watchful, prayerful effort.

Old impressions fade; old motives lose power; old vows are not felt with old obligation. Ever-wakeful Enemy, ready to "pounce," or to enter by a long-disused, almost forgotten entrance of susceptibility or liability. 2. Easier, more natural, to lie, like lotus eaters, idly in our boat and drift, not even noticing the drift. "Drifting" the subtlest, commonest danger of the ordinary Christian life. To be holy or earnest, even to maintain one's *status* in Christ, means taking trouble. No *inherent* grace; any *implanted* grace must be renewed unceasingly; no possibility of accumulating a capital stock of grace [and then "retiring from business," "living on the dividends" of the accumulated grace and work of earlier Christian life. Many seem trying to do so]. Yet "deceitfulness of sin," indolence, pride, fear to know the unwelcome, half-suspected truth, incline a man to slur over or to avoid altogether any examination of *present position*, the only one worth anything before God. Liability to ignorance and error, dangerous in their practical consequences, to be reckoned with. "*Know ye not?*" Forgotten? Not examined lately?

IV. **Methods and tests.**—1. Supreme one this: You prove me to see whether Christ speaks through me. Look within: *Does Christ dwell in you?* (cf. Rom. viii. 9, 10), *i.e.* by His Spirit? Have you the "witness"? (Rom. viii. 15, 16; Gal. iv. 6, 7). Have you the "fruit"? [N.B. one and indivisible; not "*fruits*"; a *cluster* of grapes on a branch of the Vine; not so many independent figs or apples.] "The hope" (Col. i. 27, = "Christ in you," or inseparable from it). 2. The Word is an objective test; our memory and Consciousness supply facts on which Conscience sits as judge (2 Cor i. 12; you need the objective standard, unaffected by any "personal equation" of mood, or prejudice, or bias—1 Cor. iv. 4, "I know nothing against myself, yet," etc.). Experience will often interpret Scripture to a man; Scripture will always interpret and value experience for him. 3. Should be done with prayer for Divine light upon Self and Scripture. Neither can be understood without the other. [Woollen manufacturer, examining cloth, wants a north window with clear, open, steady light; brings cloth to the window.] 4. Should be done in solitude, if possible; soul alone with God. The true and useful element in "retreats." "*As of God, in the sight of God speak*" *to ourselves* in examining and judging ourselves (ii. 17). Humbling ourselves before Him; holding ourselves ready to hear all He has to tell us, and to act upon it, following it in any direction, to any length of consequence. 5. "Any time is no time." Some need a fixed rule and fixed times. Some best avail themselves of (say) birthdays, times of sorrow, or of blessing; some of the quiet of the House of God.

V. **There are dangers attending.**—Unwilling heart, or worldly, exaggerates these as "reasons" for discontinuance. Real danger: lest it grow (1) *mechanical*, as when done by "a Method," with scheduled questions for self-examination, or, as to time, become a mere bit of routine, done without heart or earnestness; or (2) *morbid*, a very common liability to the most sensitive souls, of tender, but not very enlightened, conscience; *e.g.* they set up an impossible standard, not found in Scripture, drawn from their (perhaps mistaken) interpretation of what they hear or read as the "experience" of others; forget (*as their* profoundly reasonable *Lord never does*) the differences of temperament, of training, and in the sense of value of words; scourge themselves needlessly because they do not exactly correspond with their self-imposed standard. Or they are distressed because they do not see distinct "progress" as between the examination of one evening and that of the next. [This like looking to see growth in child or plant after every few minutes. Rather measure the rising of the tide *after some little interval*, and by the test of some definite mark upon the shore—some

definite habit or point of character; *e.g.* can they at a year's end discover a manifest increase of self-control by grace of God?] Yet greater danger, and more ordinary, is not to examine at all. Also, the broad lines which mark and identify a Christian are recognisable at any moment. It is also to himself a matter of direct and immediate knowledge whether or not a man have "the love of God shed abroad in his heart."

VI. **If we will not.**—1. May wake up in eternity finding ourselves bankrupts; with no true foundation on the Rock. May be "*reprobate*" when God tests finally, "*castaway*" (same word) when we come before the Judge hoping for a crown. 2. Short of this extreme issue, the Adversary will do his "trying," with his evil intention. Not to "tempt" ourselves (so literally) invites him to "tempt" us. 3. Also God must put us to proof, finally using "fire" (1 Cor. iii. 12, δοκιμάζω) upon work whose quality we would not ourselves test; sending, before that, many sharp providences which are the acids and other reagents of His Divine chemistry, to test or purify what, though sadly alloyed, is really gold. (As Apelles, Critical Notes.) ["Deus tentat, ut doceat; diabolus, ut decipiat" (Augustine). "Da, Domine, ut per tentationem probemur, non reprobemur" (Abelard, on Lord's Prayer).]

Ver. 8. *Nothing against, Everything for, the Truth.*

I. 1. **Paul's immediate meaning.**—"Corinthians who can endure the self-applied, or God-applied, tests; who have 'come forth as gold' when tried, '*true*' according to standard, have nothing to fear from me. My Apostolic power is for '*building up*' (ver. 10). My work, my Master's design, is constructive, not destructive. If I do '*destroy*' ('cast down,' R.V.), it is only to prepare for construction. I am a helper of all good men; it is their fault if I seem against evil ones." Every minister should so bear himself amongst his people that they feel this; he should plainly be to them a rallying-point and a support of "*true*" men and women, whoever may "bear hard upon" them. They should feel that he will never, at any rate in intention, frown upon, or discourage, persons, character, work, that are "*true.*" Will help it, sympathise with it, encourage it, guide it, train it, but never check it. God and Truth are on the same side. The Pastor and Truth should be on the same side, too. 2. Rise higher. "We are of the truth;" therefore even the Law of the True God will not condemn, but justify, us. [Justification is pardon in conformity to the requirements of the Christ-satisfied law.] "Law not made for—does not lie against—a righteous man" (1 Tim. i. 9). We were by nature false to God's ideal of manhood, and in life a living negation of His righteous requirement. In Him Who is "the Truth" we are being brought into fuller and fuller accord with the Law of Righteousness—being made "*true.*" In the Day of Christ the very Law will say, "*I can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.*"

II. **Principle so stated as to be of wide, general application.**—1. True of truth in art, natural science, every embodiment of the true. There are fashions in music or form; there is the music, the painting, the poetry of an age, and of that only. Author, painter, composer, each hits the fancy of his age, because he wears its "dress" and speaks its thought in its dialect. All this passes away with the age, or the country for there are *localisms* in all these fields of work. Out of every country, and every land, out of every true artist's work, there emerges for permanent survival at least one thing that survives because it is of no one age or country or individual. It is universal, **true.** New fashions come and go, but they can "*do nothing against*" these slowly emerging, accumulating masterpieces, which command the allegiance and growing admiration of all qualified to judge, age after age. Time can do nothing against them. So in our knowledge of the natural world.

Hypotheses and theories are exalted or hardened into the dogmas of a century (or of *a decade*). Hastily formed, too eagerly accepted; the acceptance itself being a fashion, or a "craze." They are challenged in their turn, discredited (perhaps unduly, and without discrimination), succeeded by others as crudely true or altogether baseless. Or, more often, are modified substantially, as new facts reward close observation. (Hardly any entirely baseless hypothesis ever gets wide, even though temporary, acceptance; generally it is a stammering endeavour to speak out "*truth*"; a blunderingly tentative groping after truth, stretching blind hands into darkness, grasping mingled truth and error.) After, and out of, challenge, discussion, modification, rejection; out of too eager triumph of opponents, too hasty fears of supporters; whatever is *truth* emerges; a growing *corpus* of ascertained truth accumulates. Nothing that was really *true* perished in the process; the accidental, the experimental which did not stand verification, the temporary, the idiosyncrasy of the observer or the theory-maker, passed, and left *Truth*. Could do *nothing against* it; indeed, *all* worked *for it*. Christian should remember this, even when Science or some scientists may seem arrogantly, aggressively, perilously antagonistic to Revelation. Christian can do nothing against what *is* true in Science; Science also can do nothing against what is true in Religion. 2. Note this last. *The* lesson of the experience of the ages. The Bible emerges from the special attack of each century with undiminished, increased authority and acceptance. Whatever is Truth in its statements about God or man, or the relations between them, emerges age after age, with a new claim to acceptance in the very fact of its newest survival. In any new challenge of even the historicity of the record, the presumption derived from the past is that "as the last time, only more so," will again be the end of the battle. Each new century sees it win the allegiance of a new set of hearts. Human hearts say, "That book is *true*; it *finds me*; it is a key whose correspondence with my heart and the facts of my life, argues that it was made to unlock me." Repeatedly has attack upon historical details only ended in new verification, perhaps at that very point. Unfair treatment; unwise, untenable defence of it by too hasty friends; open attack of enemies; subtle or traitorous assault; have—as matter of fact—never done anything against the Truth as embodied in Bible; have all worked for the Truth. So the great doctrines of Christianity emerge time after time unharmed from the fiery testing of inquiry and assault. They take temporary fashions of statement, adapted to the need or to the assault of their time or age; now one, now another, aspect of them needs emphasis; always with the peril of undue emphasis, and of discrediting, or decrying the complementary aspects, seen and needed by other Churches or ages or men. Every *Church* creed or confession gains something, loses something, after every controversy. *Truth*, as God sees and knows it, loses nothing, always gains. God is taking care of the *Truth*. All truth of every kind is of Him. [With deep significance, worth expanding, one may borrow, and say:] "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved." Often we can do nothing but "stand still and know that He is God," as we see Him taking the defence of Truth out of the hand of the Church, or of a (sectional) Church, and Himself vindicating it. Enemies and friends may say: "*We can do nothing against*," etc. [May borrow again, with no remote connection,] "All things work together for good to" the Truth of God, as a whole, and for every partial embodiment of it. Pre-eminently true of Him Who is The Truth. "Whosoever shall fall upon this Stone" (by way of assault) "shall be broken." Ps. ii. shows dramatically God and His Anointed sitting above the tumult of revolt, and "*laughing*." "*Yet*—**yet**—I have set My King," etc.

This shall be the issue of the last and most daring endeavour against Him (2 Thess. ii. 8, 9). "*Magna est Veritas* —artistic, scientific, Biblical, dogmatic, Christ — *et prævalebit.*" [(1) This conviction always is a strong presumption, fairly based on the past. (2) It is also rooted in the reason of the thing. Whatever is part of God's Truth, in any special aspect, may be overlaid, disfigured, by temporary accretions, or erroneous additions, by the mistake, or the enmity, or the misjudged, misdirected support of an Age, a Church, a Man; but it is there, and will survive, to stand clear when all of temporary has disappeared. [Cf. Egyptian temples surviving, and standing clear of, the less permanent domestic edifices once built around them. Man goes, cities go; they stand.] 3. Whatever meets the perennial need of man's intellect, conscience, heart — especially those of sinful men — vindicates itself anew perennially, as having Truth in it. *E.g.* freedom of will; sense of Sin (no mere passing or personal access of emotion); existence of a Creator and Moral Governor; the objective value of Prayer; an objective efficiency in the death of Christ to procure pardon; Vicarious Sacrifice; possibility of falling finally; all these, and others, may have their temporary, local, ecclesiastical, imperfect way of being stated. They may be unwisely defended. But they meet, under all the varying fashions of statement, the need of the universal heart in man. They have their root deep in the instincts and conscience of universal man. They "are of God," and cannot be overthrown (Acts. v. 38, 39). They are Truth.] [Renan avows: "Quant au vrai Dieu de la conscience humaine, *celui-là est inattaquable.* Il a sa raison d'être dans une foi invincible et non dans les raisonnements plus ou moins ingénieux." Similarly he does not consider religion "une duperie subjective de notre nature," but believes "qu'elle répond à une réalité extérieure." Therefore Religion also is really unassailable. (*Les Apôtres*, Introd.) So Emerson, in his dialect, says: "The World-spirit is a good swimmer, and storms and waves cannot drown him."]

Ver. 11. "*The God of peace.*"—The names of God in Paul's prayers are never chosen at random—however true in themselves—but always with a close relation of appropriateness to the blessing asked or the work He does. So here. What a name! No heathen divinity ever wore, or at any rate deserved to wear, it. God of Truth, of Power, of Holiness, *of Peace.*

I. **Characteristic of His very being.**—"Internal," absolute harmony and rest, because of absolute holiness. The "peaceful" God. [God could not give His peace to, or plant it within, an unholy nature. Circumstances are not the root-disquiet of our life; our own hearts and their pride, or selfishness, etc., give us all our real trouble.]

II. **He loves peace.**—[Profoundly significant that we "like" what is "like" us.] He is grieved at, and can hardly "*be with,*" a Church that is not "*of one mind.*"

III. **He works for peace.**—All the drift of His providential and redemptive government of the world tends to, aims at, this. The Gift of Christ is the supreme witness to His heart in this respect. [So the "*peacemakers*" are pre-eminently "*the children of God,*" the Great Peacemaker (Matt. v. 9).]

IV. **He gives peace**: to our hearts by the Atonement of His Son, and by the Work of His Spirit. It is the "*peace of God*" which is to "*guard heart and thoughts through Christ Jesus*" (Phil. iv. 7, R.V.).

Ver. 11. "*Be perfected.*"—Prayer for restoration to corporate perfectness.

I. **Negatively.** — Perfect recovery which would result from "*not doing evil,*" "*doing what is honest*" (ver. 7). The vices which infected Corinthian Church exhibit in epitome those which have been the bane of the Church of Christ generally from the beginning.

(1) Fundamental disorder was *rebellion against* the supreme *authority* of the Divine Revealer and the Divine Inspirer and their Apostolic representative. Paul's aim is "*to bring . . . into captivity*," etc. (2 Cor. x. 5). His final appeal, in the hearing not only of Corinthians, but of Christendom to the end of the world, is "*we have the mind of Christ*" (1 Cor. ii. 16). The Scriptures of revelation contain this. Rebellion against Paul—against these Scriptures—is a virtual rejection of Christianity. "As a principle in the individual, this is fatal to religious stability and growth. As a principle in the Church, it is the root of all disorganisation; and it must be put away, with all its forms of manifestation, before the community bearing the name of Christ can put on its 'perfection.'" (2) A direct result of (1),—*a lax maintenance of* some of the *vital doctrines* of the Christian confession." [*E.g.* in 1 Cor. xv., with its bearing upon the Atonement, and the whole basis of Christian hope and salvation.] "It was not without reference to corruptions of doctrine that the dejected Apostle expressed his fear (xii. 20). His vehement desire to preserve them 'a chaste virgin to Christ' (xi. 2-4), undefiled by doctrinal error, as he himself explains its meaning, gives a peculiar tremulousness and tumult to his diction. . . . The integrity of their faith was in his thought when he 'prayed that they might be *perfect*'" [Jas. i. 4, a good equivalent of the word]. (3) "*Neglect* and *irreverence* in the *Divine service* invariably follow hard upon laxity of doctrine." Disorganisation in worship . . . to an extreme almost inconceivable by us; the supper of the Lord so desecrated as to call down upon the Church such visitations as sickness and death. Second Epistle shows "the same leaven at work in other directions; and the final prayer included the removal of the spirit of disorder and the observance of all that was 'honourable.'" Two kinds of dishonour are actualities, or perpetual liabilities, in Divine service: To take away its simplicity, and discern in the ordinances more than they have to show; to rob everything external and symbolical of its true value, and reduce religious ceremonial to the level of mere human arrangement. Both equally distant from Church "*perfection.*" (4) Closely connected is the *spirit of faction.* He sets no limit to his righteous indignation against the disturbers of the unity of the Church. The first paragraphs of the First Epistle and the last in the Second Epistle unite in this. The strong references to his severity as the minister of the Saviour's wrath . . . explained by his resentment at this deadly sin. (5) *Violation of Christian morality.* In xii. there is obvious reference to those two classes of moral offence from which vii. 1 exhorted them to cleanse themselves. Sins "*of the spirit*" are summed up *here* (xii. 20) *more completely* than anywhere else; and *here only* as marking the conduct of professing Christians. The true, only means of recovery were neutralised by infidelity and the haughty spirit of Rationalism.

II. **Perfection positively considered.**—His good wish is not to be limited to the removal of the "*evil*" marring "*perfection*"; he longed for their attainment of all the completeness that may belong to a Church. Note the wonderful fact that such a Church should be thought capable of perfect amendment, a restoration to soundness not at some distant time, but as it were immediately, and by an energetic co-operation with Divine grace. . . . Certain it is that for a season the Corinthian Church enjoyed great prosperity. 1. The bond of Church perfectness is . . . a compact *organisation vivified* and kept in living unity *by the Holy Spirit.* One regimen and discipline; factions suppressed, divisions abolished; all the Corinthian Christian *sections* one corporate body. To-day, whilst recognising the great divisions of Christendom, each section should cultivate this unity within itself. Perfection means that lawlessness

within a Church, and bitterness toward other Churches, are gone. 2. A certain standard of *perfection even in order of worship.* This not unattainable, or of slight importance. 3. "*Perfection*" includes a noble theory of *mutual help in the Christian fellowship.* Corinthian Epistles a complete depository of the social principles of Christianity, and of the preceptive details of its system of mutual edification. This the purpose and beauty of chap. xiii., "*Charity.*" "Every member of the body must in his vocation and stewardship render back to Christianity all that in Christianity he receives, and give to the community the fullest advantage of whatever talent he as an individual may possess. . . . A perfection not attainable by the community on earth, but the nearer the approach to this, the nearer the Church to the realisation of its calling. . . . No Apostolical test of '*perfectness*' in the Church community more easily applied, or more generally forgotten." 4. *High standard of morality.* "The Church that does not prosecute to [ecclesiastical] death every capital offence against its purity is very far from '*perfection.*' But the more effectual discipline is a high standard in the common sentiment of the people through the sedulous instruction of the ministry." 5. *Strong spirit of charity in the community.* Note the fulness of detail, and the great interest, Paul gives to the "*collection.*" The "*corporate*" is only worked out through the "*personal.*"—*Condensed from Pope, "Prayers of St. Paul,"* vii.

Ver. 14. *Final Benediction.*—In homiletic use the stress may either be laid upon **the threefold grace invoked,** or upon **the personal names** and their theological suggestions. Accordingly two lines of treatment are suggested.

I. 1. Verse like a coin which often needs calling in and reminting, in our thought and heart. In constant, current use, much of the clearness and sharpness of the impression upon it, and something of the weight and value, are worn away and lost. We tend to use it also without much thought; as we pass a coin from hand to hand, without very distinctly adverting to its pattern or value. 2. An important text in point of doctrine (see next homily). This and the baptismal formula are the two most definitely orderly statements of what little we know [and perhaps *could be told*] about the doctrine of the Trinity of Persons in the Oneness of the Nature of God. [They are lamps in our hand flashing light backward upon, and downward into, obscurities in the Old Testament, which otherwise must have remained dark.] Many texts guard us from thinking of three or of many Gods; these two gather up into a focus rays of teaching found scattered and separate elsewhere, and give us *three personal names*; *equal*, or their co-ordination here would be blasphemous; *Divine*, for each is here prayed to to give His characteristic blessing; and yet, *One* standing mysteriously *first amongst three equals*, as if having Godhead so peculiarly His own, that He is specially called not "the Father," but "God."

II. **Christ's gift, grace.**—1. Bearing in mind the close connection always found between the doctrine of Trinity and the life of the soul, it is easy to see why "grace" specially associated with Christ. We might, we do, call the love of the Father grace, for it is free, unmerited favour to sinners who only deserved penalty and "wrath." We do call the "communion of the Holy Ghost" grace. We might, with propriety, speak equally freely of the *love* of our Lord Jesus Christ, of *communion* with, and in, the Son or the Father. 2. But Paul, like John (i. 17), specially associates grace with Christ. A double antithesis in John (*loc. cit.*); not only between grace under Christ taking the place of law under Moses, but between "was given" and "came." Moses only "gave," he did not make, nor do more than hand on, as any other man appointed *ad hoc* might have done, what he had received from God. But grace, though origi-

nating in the Father's "good will to man," in as true a sense sprung from the Son's tender compassion for our lost and unhappy case. He did not simply convey, He wrought grace, as only He could have wrought. Moses was not indispensable to the Law; Christ is indispensable to Grace. 3. Sin meant alienation, separation, antagonism. Christ reconciled, bridged the gulf, made peace. To appreciate His grace, suppose Him and His whole work eliminated from the conditions of man's life as related to a holy God. There must have been despairing certainty of wrath, instead of hope; helplessness, instead of moral power, which is from its earliest beginnings, through all its growth and activities, to its perfection, a thing entirely a gift *ab extra*, grace. To Him we owe days of grace, in a kingdom of grace, a life in an atmosphere of grace. He is pre-eminently the Lord and Giver of **Grace**. 4. Peculiar emphasis of blessing in all this to the ex-Israelite, Paul, remembering, and sympathetically understanding, his Israelite brethren's case under the yoke of the law. "Good news for you weary and heavy laden men of Israel. A yoke and a burden for you still, indeed, easy and light. Rest to your souls in Jesus of Nazareth, the Lord Jesus the Messiah, in His grace." [This is the primary connection of thought between Matt. xi. 28, and the preceding part of chapter.] 5. For Gentiles, slaves of their sins, haunted by conscience, fearing the worst in regard to the unknown, dark future, morally impotent and condemning vainly their own impotence, he had no higher wish than: "I pray that Jesus Christ may show you, in all their fullest reach, all the possibilities of His Gospel of grace; that they may be the elements of your habitual life. Power, perfect and continuous; peace, perfect and undoubted; holiness, perfect and continuously growing, till grace merges in, broadens into, glory."

III. **The Father's gift, love.**—1. Observe the *significant, necessary order*. The "**grace of . . . , [then] the love** of," etc. Picture broad valley lying parched, scorched, beneath fierce sun-rays of weeks of unclouded, unbroken, midsummer weather. Picture high up in hills at head of valley huge reservoir, full of water, which would save and fertilise all below. But no outlet; dam is strong; doors are closed; waters cannot flow. "Thy love unknown has broken every barrier down, . . . O Lamb of God." Illustration so far applicable as this, that though, naturally and unhindered, the "gravitation" of that love would have meant an eager outpouring of itself down to our level, the full heart of God could only (so the matter is revealed to us) empty its fulness upon a perishing, dying world through the work of Christ, which broke down the twofold "dam," of God's holiness and law, and of man's sin. Now, by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, in all its Divine fulness, may flow down in free unstinted abundance into our needy life. 2. Now: "May God give you the wealth, the honour, of His love in all its lavish fulness, according to your need, 'according to His riches'; His love in every form that it can assume or that you may require that it shall,—comfort, or rebuke, or guidance, or relief in difficulty, or solution of perplexities. God puts Himself, in all that His love can be or do, at the call of your necessity, to bring all He has into operation for your welfare, if need be." [Paul says, "*My* God" (Phil. iv. 19).] The soul may say: "All He has, and is, is mine. Beyond the love I had from Him when I was forgetful and rebellious, I have the love of God."

IV. 1. The "grace," and the "love," are personal blessings; a man may enjoy them alone. The **Spirit's gift, fellowship**, reminds of a brotherhood in the love of God, a common sharing in the grace of Christ; no selfish isolation in the heritage of blessing. 2. This is more than a prayer that all fellow-Christians may share together in the gifts and graces of the Spirit. Not merely are they persons who have received the like gifts and blessings; not merely children

sitting at same table, enjoying each a like portion; the bond is closer. All Paul's and Christ's teaching about the unity of the branches of a vine, the limbs and parts of a body, all is in concentrated implication in this: "The communion of the Holy Ghost." "The selfsame Spirit who is in me is Himself also in you. You and I are members of the same 'Christ,' each of us alive, not with a similar life,—even exactly similar,—but with one and the same Life-giver, thrilling in you, stirring in me. [When your light shines, and mine, it is not as in old days of candles and lamps, each a co-ordinate, independent source of precisely similar light, but as now, when the basis of the light-giving is concurrently derived from one common reservoir and source, one common element distributing itself into each of us, without division of itself. (Illustration to be used with caution in presentation.)] If further, *e.g.*, you love souls and I love them, it is the manifestation and working of the same Holy Ghost, and consequently the same 'love in the Spirit' (Col. i. 8)." 3. Happy fellowship, closer, and binding closer, than common interests, temperaments, sympathies, tastes, affections, blood, so that they who have it are really nearer to strangers who have it, than to their very kin if these have it not. Wonderful the common understanding it sets up, and the oneness of instinct, love, purpose, He creates amongst these in each and all of whom He dwells. 4. What a remedy for Corinthian factions, jealousies; for all class or social divisions in any Church. Hand cannot hurt, and must help, hand in the same body. Foot and head must feel and work together for each other's life and good. 5. In a family no unity like this; no such bond, no other absolutely secure bond between husband and wife, parents and children, employers and servants, but this common sharing in the indwelling of the same Holy Ghost. 6. Amidst all "conditions of membership," whether proposed or actually employed, this is to be presupposed. It underlies all. It overrides all other methods of Church discipline. He is admitted into *the* Church who has a part in the fellowship; he is automatically excluded who loses it; however the imperfectly accurate, imperfectly administered, arrangements of any particular Church may affect him.

Or thus: the occasion of a Homily upon *The Trinity and Redemption.*

I. **Why do men hold the doctrine?**—Because we *believe* it. We believe it because we find it in the Bible. It is, on our part, entirely a case of Faith in what, in the other, is a matter of pure Revelation. But for the Bible we should know nothing about the question. We know nothing of it except what we find in the Bible. No man can be expected to receive it to whom the Bible is no final authority. No man can be compelled to believe it to whom the Bible is not supreme. No argument can be held at all, unless on the common understanding that the disputants are not to go behind the Bible. The question is always, not "What thinkest thou?" but, "What readest thou? What does the Book—God, through the Book—say?" [And, *Do read.* Do not take beliefs on authority. And do not take doubts on authority, either! Be neither a believer nor a sceptic, merely as relying on some human teacher.]

II. **What do we hold?**—1. First, we find the Bible very express in the sense: "*One God, one only.*" The Old Testament made "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. vi. 4), *the* creed of an Israelite. To this day it is nearly the first lesson in the instruction of a Jewish child. In the midst of a world given up to multiplying its gods—and degrading itself and them, as they were multiplied—very nobly, in its later history particularly, did Israel uphold that truth as its testimony. It is *the* emphasised part of the whole truth in the Old Testament. In this the Old Testament bore its witness against Israel itself. When the world's danger was polytheism, and

when Israel itself was always ready to descend to idolatry, this was the side of the truth which *needed* prominence and emphasis. 2. This Old Testament testimony has never been withdrawn or qualified. When we come to the New Testament we find just as clearly its doctrine, "To us . . . one God," etc. (viii. 6). Yet in our text it is the same Paul who has given to the Church of Christ its benediction, beneath whose sweet spell the child is baptized, the Christian man and woman are wedded, the dead are buried, the assembly for Christian worship is dismissed. This verse, with Matt. xxviii. 19, gives the most complete and explicit summary form of the Bible doctrine. 3. In the clearer light of the New Testament we see that Old Testament believers mainly knew God in Him Whom we call "the Father," now that we have seen and known "the Son." And, in fact, three names have come into view, "Father, Son, Holy Spirit." *Three*, not more, not fewer. Here they stand all, side by side. They were for the first time ranged thus in significant co-ordination when Jesus spoke the words above quoted (Matt. xxviii. 19). What are we to think of them? God; a man; an influence, which is not even a person? Is that likely? Or possible? Or are we to think of the third as "personal," as really as the first and second? And the second and third, are they as truly Divine as the first? A believer in "the Trinity" thinks he finds this Book often speaking of each of the three as we speak of other personal names, and as we speak of the Divine Person Whom we call "the Father." *Not always:* but a good reason can in every instance be found for that. 4. So, then, here is the fact: From end to end this Book says, "*One God; one only*"; whilst more and more clearly as the revelation draws near to its close, there emerge three Names, each a person, each God. Questions start up; speculations multiply; a child can see difficulties; every responsible teacher of the doctrine has had to see and discuss every one of them. His position is that he bows before this Book, with its two groups of statements. Without it he knows nothing; with it he does not know much, but he knows *that much*. 5. "Do not understand their relations to each other?" Nor does the believer in the doctrine. But he finds express statements, and teachings by the help of mutually supplementary, mutually complementary analogies, which make it reasonable to say: "Begotten of the Father," "Proceeding from the Father (and the Son)." Imperfect expressions, and needing guarding and qualifying exposition; all very obvious to criticism. But they have emerged from the controversies of the early centuries, surviving because found on the whole the fittest. "Person," *e.g.*, is confessedly a very imperfect summary expression of the facts it is connected with. But where we find a personal name, self-knowledge, and a will which can will and can do as it will,—the best word we have is "person," though not in this particular case perfectly applicable all round. 6. Very many of our creed statements are only negations of assertions which overstate one aspect of the whole Truth, or which omit to take into account some group of Scripture sayings or facts. "You make three Gods?" No; for Scripture which reveals the Three, insists also upon the One. "One person, and that one He Whom in the flesh we know as Jesus Christ," says the Swedenborgian form of the old Sabellianism, varying from its ancient model in making the Second, and not the First of the Three, that of which the others are aspects or relational presentations. No; for He says, "The Comforter, Whom the Father will send in My name," as one person may speak of two others, not himself. The heart of the matter is there.

III. **Why do we care to hold the doctrine?**—"What does it matter?" 1. Generally, it may be said that Scripture never tells us anything as matter of mere correct doctrine, and

of right information; but always so much, and in such a manner, as may be of practical service to our spiritual life. 2. The doctrine under notice is bound up most closely with (*a*) our distinctively Christian Worship, and (*b*) our Christian Experience. (*a*) The Mahometan and the Jew come in worship to *our* one God. The latter will not have our Mediator; the former accepts one who is (he thinks) a prophet come from God to reveal His will, but who is no priest to go in for him to God to make atonement for sin. The Scheme of *Christian* Worship is: "Through the Son we have our access by one Spirit unto the Father." Isaiah and John both heard the threefold note in the heavenly worship (Isa. vi.; Rev. iv.); earthly and heavenly worship agree in this. The old congregations were dismissed with a threefold blessing (Num. vi. 24-26); as our text has for ages been the best formula whose lingering sound may die away last of all that has been said, into silence and peace, when a Christian congregation breaks up, and departs to suffering, service, life. (*b*) 1. The most nearly external and relative initiation into the Christian life is stamped with the Name—three, and one (Matt. xxviii. 19). And if the doctrine be not true, our Mediator is only a creature, perhaps only a man; our Sanctifier is only a figure of speech, the creation of our poetical faculty. 2. But, most of all, it is not upon a text here or there that the doctrine rests. The three names pervade, permeate, give form and colour to, whole passages of the Epistles. Look for them, and we find all the experimental work and language of the New Testament wrought with their golden thread running through all. 3. Nearly all the statements culled out, and urged against the doctrine, are explained by this fact: We are told next to nothing as to what, in the inner being of God and the manner of His existence, lies behind these three names, and the analogies which indicate or suggest the relations between them; everything is exhibited in connection with the working out of Redemption. With the slightest exceptions we only see the gracious work in process: "Let us make man *anew* in Our image." "The Son says, 'The Father is greater than I.'" So He is, in the same sense as a son, admitted by his father into a subsidiary partnership in his father's work, must say it; because so far as he is acting under orders, to that extent he is only an employé of his father. As to manhood and manhood, father and son are equal. As between senior, managing partner, and junior, executant partner; the father is greater than the son. As to Godhead and Godhead, Father and Son are equals; as executant of "not His own will [independently, or possibly divergently] but the will of Him Who sent Him," and as effectuating our Redemption, the Son yields precedence to the Father. And the Spirit reveals Himself more clearly in, and to, the soul He sanctifies, than He does in those Scriptures where His self-suppressing work is to exhibit and glorify Christ. We scarcely know anything of the Trinity except as active in the work of Human Redemption. 4. Our salvation, therefore, and our experimental life depend most intimately upon, and are most closely interwoven with, the specific offices of each "Person" of the Trinity. Our experimental life is full of the Trinity. Experiment shows that, as a rule, the doctrine has maintained, and been associated with, the fullest, freshest, most widely accepted hymnology, devotional literature, and religious life. For that reason, as well as for its truth, does the Church *care* to hold the doctrine.

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